

The Mythos of Racial Reconciliation

by Joshua Whipps, from www.choosinghats.org

An Introduction, and A Few Articles Examined

As the adoptive father of a teenage son who many would consider "black" (as he is the product of a "white" biological mother and a "black" biological father - who we don't even have a name for) living in the Deep South, it is vitally important for me to have a developed anthropology, in order to faithfully deal with so-called "racial" issues. This is true not particularly for my sake, personally, or even for that of my oldest son's; but for the internal consistency of my own family. As the father believes and teaches, so believes the family, in general. It should also be true for you - not for your own sake, or that of any particular child, but for your own familial flock, within the local body your shepherds protect and nurture.

Cue the last year or so of nearly constant, unrelenting media coverage of every conceivable angle of "racial conflict." Racial conflict, we are told by many, needs "racial reconciliation", right? That's a nice, Biblical sounding term. My problem with that phrase, however, is that I don't find it in the Bible. Oh, you can find "reconciliation" in there. Who, however, are the parties reconciled, in Scripture? Here's a hint. In every case but one, it is men with God. In that other case, it is a husband and wife. Given the parallelism of the two relationships, this should be as expected. Let's look at a few blog posts from Reformed authors which exhort us toward "racial reconciliation", and see whether they have a sound argument from Scripture to support this thesis.

First, Tisby's "[The A.R.C. of Racial Reconciliation](#)." Notice something lacking in this article. While it's an interesting reference piece, with plenty of links - *what* does it reference? There is one Scriptural reference, and a few quotes, uncited, none of which seem to be especially relevant to the thesis presented. Gen 3:15 is the only verse specifically cited. What promise of "reconciliation" is that? Well, specifically, it is the promise that Satan will be crushed underfoot. Leaving [Calvin's objection to the seed being Christ](#), that still leaves it as not so much a promise of reconciliation, but of victory over sin and death. In a sense, that's reconciliation, I guess, but it doesn't seem to be a very good verse upon which to hang the entirety of your premise, does it? There are passages with a far greater import to the subject. I'm not going to give this post much more detail, because it is primarily a reference for what people are encouraged to learn about the topic. What we are told to reference is significant, as it outlines what the author considers to be significant.

There are three primary texts to consider, when we speak of "reconciliation." Colossians 1, Ephesians 2, 2nd Corinthians 5. Later on in this paper we will see if any of them lend themselves to a consideration of reconciliation being *between groups of men, one with each other*, rather than relying solely on Gen 3:15. We'll get to those texts in a bit, and discuss them in considerable detail.

Second, Williams' "[The Death and Resurrection of Jesus Christ as God's Provision for Reconciliation](#)." To begin, what I found profoundly jarring about this entire article was that nearly *everything* in it was about race. The discussion in the article wasn't about the transformation of *covenantal doctrine*, or of *regenerate lives*, that Romans outlines, but highlighted a supposed *racial makeup change* of the church's population as the reason that Paul mentions Gentiles and Jews so frequently - and is purportedly the backbone from which the book is hung, according to Williams. As someone who has done frequent and intensive exegetical work in Romans, that thesis was so novel, and so shatteringly anachronistic that it was, to my genuine shame, hard to consider as a serious attempt at scholarship. Secondly, "race," while widely recognized to be, in academic circles, a *modern* subjectivistic concept, is imported into the text with frightening regularity; and conflated with ethnicity - without argumentation. Williams doesn't deal with the multiplicity of individual verses he proof-texts in any real detail. As a professor of Biblical interpretation, I expected much better from his work. He, too, cites Gen 3:15, but as evidence of enmity between human groups - but we aren't told why this passage is evidence of this. He also cites Gen 11 as support for same; we aren't told why confusion of languages entails human enmity. He cites Ephesians 2:1-10 as saying that "racism is a spiritual problem" - but it seems to say nothing even remotely like that, nor does he explain why this is considered to be the force of this text. In my judgment, it's a massively confusing article which doesn't seem to argue its conclusions, but simply imports them into the passages under consideration. Don't get me wrong - I agree that "One way sin's ugly face shows itself in the real world is by means of racism." - but exegetical work isn't how you support that thesis. Seeing everything in a text in terms of one particular ideological point is a recipe for exegetical failure. However, don't write Williams off entirely due to the shoddiness of this particular article. He does better, and he actually gives me much of what I am seeking from the other authors I deal with in this piece, although I disagree with him in many respects. We'll return to him in a moment, and again towards the end. I would very much like to discuss this issue with Dr. Williams in the future, as well.

Third, Ong's "[Don't Waste Your Race: Racial Stewardship](#)(1)" (2). This post has some peculiar arguments in it, (I do appreciate his attempt to make arguments, although I consider them to be deeply flawed) and I want to address them briefly. First, it introduces the article with this paragraph:

The myth of a post-racial U.S. society has been exposed. America is an increasingly racialized society. Now say what you will about race as a social construct. The fact is that it pervades the American context. Its dominance colors the American reality. Ignoring race in the USA is impossible.

Sure. It would be nice if the US were post-racial. I doubt that we mean the same thing by "post-racial", but we'll get to that, too. It isn't, of course. However, just because something is *inveterate* does not mean that it is *valid*. Many social constructs are inveterate, yet *invalid*. My intent is not to *ignore* race - it is to *challenge* race. As a category, as a self-identification, and as a differentiation. Dominance does not necessitate validity, either. If that were true, many things about history would be different.

There is also a temptation, particularly among evangelicals, to go back to “[color-blindness](#)” or assimilationist melting pot metaphors. I’ve seen evangelicals advance a post-racial ideology on the basis of sociology and Scripture. However, I’m not convinced.

First, on the basis of sociological theory, many evangelicals argue that race is merely a social construct. Therefore, since it’s something that developed and came to be in a particular context, it can’t be universal, and if it’s not universal, then why not just ignore race and enter post-racial bliss? I’m not going to sit here and deny that race is a social construction (although I believe that that is only a partial truth). However, just because something is a social construction does not mean that it is useless and irrelevant. Sociologists believe that language is a social construction, but that doesn’t stop any of us from using it, especially for the kingdom. Ever heard of evangelism? Saying that language and race are social constructs rightly recognizes the finiteness of these concepts and their contextual nature, yet can wrongly assume that God is not behind and sovereign over them. Although imperfectly categorized by humans and sometimes used for oppressive purposes, the social concept of race finitely reflects God’s intention and design for a diversely created humanity. From before the foundation of the earth God had a vision. He saw himself being worshiped by people from every tribe, tongue, and nation.

Secondly, and more significantly, evangelicals advance a post-racial ideology on the basis of Scripture. The admirable evangelical insistence on the universal authority of Scripture over all people regardless of race, can become misguided by such temptations. A misguided emphasis on the universal claims of Scripture can lead to the marginalization of racial concerns. Amongst more than a few evangelicals today, race is often seen negatively as nothing but a divisive social construct. After all, doesn’t Galatians 3:28 commend a post-racial ethic and a post-racial worldview to all who are united in Christ?

I don’t think that’s what Apostle Paul was getting at. There is definitely a sense of priority that must be given to our “in Christ” identity. Few passages of Scripture state this truth better than Galatians 3:28. Still, it is unlikely that Apostle Paul’s intention was to flatten Christians’ genders and races into an amorphous identity. Wasn’t it Paul who said that he became all things to all people that he might win some? Wasn’t it Paul who gave specific commands to Jews as Jews, Gentiles as Gentiles, slaves as slaves, masters as masters, men as men, and women as women? In Galatians specifically, Paul’s teaching on justification is that it is offered to people of all cultures. The Gentiles did not have to stop being Gentiles to be justified. But one might object, “Well, but didn’t the Jews have to give up an aspect of their culture? Didn’t the gospel of justification require them to cease the Jewish custom of eating separately from the Gentiles?” To this, I would argue that this Jewish separation was actually a

perversion of God's intention for Abraham's progeny. Abraham was to be the father of many nations. The true Jewish religion would've anticipated an eventual unity accompanied by diversity.

Trust me. At the end of the age, when the people of God come before the throne to worship the Lamb, no one will want to wear "post-racial" lenses. No one will want to miss out on the harmonious symphony in heaven, composed of voices from every tribe, tongue, and nation.

First and foremost, I'd refer you first to my last post: [A Cordial Challenge to Members of Races](#). Secondly, please refer to this post: [The Inveterate Incoherency of Race](#). While it is true (and you acknowledge this, granted) that race is a societal construct (despite the caveat, which you don't seem to detail in your post), that is a merely secondary issue for my position. The inherent subjectivity is problematic, of course, but that isn't the main problem. I reject race for two important reasons. The primary issues are, in reverse order from your post, that 1) The concept has no place whatsoever in Scripture 2) The definition of "race" is so incoherent (or vague) as to be meaningless. There are other secondary reasons to reject it, but those two are the primary ones.

It is often assumed that ἔθνος has an equivalent meaning to what any given historical author (including the Biblical ones) intends to convey by "race", but it's just that - assumed. It's all well and good to assure me that this is true, but my own study tells me that the contemporary culture didn't think it was. It also tells me that the original recipients of the NT epistles and Gospels would have no idea what you are talking about if you equated ἔθνος with the incoherency of "race" as it is used today. There would be exactly zero context for such a conception. In fact, nobody would have anything like this concept until a couple centuries ago - in *parts* of the Western world.

Anachronism is a serious problem. I have yet to see anything substantively linking ἔθνος with anything resembling "race" on a linguistic level. If there is anything you're aware of that does so, please let me know.

Let's address Ong's arguments contextually.

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foundation of the earth God had a vision. He saw himself being worshiped by people from every tribe, tongue, and nation.

Now, I have heard this too. So let's lay the argument out that he is addressing.

P1} Race is merely a social construct

P2} Development and contextualization means it isn't universal

C} Ignore race, live in post-racial bliss

While this isn't the best argument, and the conclusion isn't one I'd pick, the premises are sound. Race is a social construct. Ong acknowledges it. So P1 is granted by all parties. P2 is also granted by Ong, and I'd agree - it isn't universal. It's the conclusion that both Ong and I disagree with. Ong's counter argument is as follows:

P1} Other social constructs like language exist, and are not universal, but finite

P2} Social constructs are useful, and even necessary, if used for the kingdom

P3} Social constructs are God's by design, and finitely reflect his intention

C} Race is a gift from God and something to be managed faithfully

See a problem? I do. What is a human without language? Is that not an integral part of the Imago Dei?

Consider: The very likeness of man to God consists of, according to every systematic imaginable, those attributes which are communicable of the nature of God, such as reason, conscience, communion and will. The very term "communicable" should clue us in that language is *not* a mere social construct. Hodge, for example, goes to great pains to emphasize that *all* language has a common root. See Hodge's ST, Vol II, Ch. 4 Sec. 4. In the Creation account, the first things God does *with* (the word is intentional) His new creation is 1) *Communicate* with him. 2) Make him a *companion* 3) Bring animals to him, that he might *name* them. Man's first job is: To listen. Second job: To speak. Not exactly a social construct, is it? Trinitarian theology makes much of the "communion" of the Divine Persons in eternity. This is the archetype of which language is the ectype. God's condescension in communicating Himself to us presupposes an innate ability for communication. Language isn't a construct - it is an ability of man. I could go into the confusion inherent in the use of universal and finite, but I will let my work elsewhere speak to that.

P2 is, to be blunt, sheer pragmatism. That isn't, by itself, a problem - but it's actually irrelevant to the argument. You could take P2 out, and the argument would be virtually unchanged. Sure, subjective things have a purpose in God's sovereign decree. That doesn't mean that this particular subjectivism is any more valid than, say, setting yourself on fire. That has a place in God's sovereign decree. You could even argue that you're doing it for the Kingdom.

Doesn't mean that you're justified in doing so, or arguing so. It just means that it *is*, therefore your argument is that it *ought*.

P3's first premise may be true, but trivially. All things that exist are "true" in that sense. Nazism was God's by design, insofar as His decretive will is concerned. Yet, does the existence of Nazis indicate God's Prescriptive will for Nazism? Nope. So, *why* does race reflect His prescriptive will? Why should we consider race as God's "vision" for us, to use Ong's term?

Secondly, and more significantly, evangelicals advance a post-racial ideology on the basis of Scripture. The admirable evangelical insistence on the universal authority of Scripture over all people regardless of race, can become misguided by such temptations. A misguided emphasis on the universal claims of Scripture can lead to the marginalization of racial concerns. Amongst more than a few evangelicals today, race is often seen negatively as nothing but a divisive social construct. After all, doesn't Galatians 3:28 commend a post-racial ethic and a post-racial worldview to all who are united in Christ?

Just to be clear, I, specifically, am advocating not a "post-racial" ideology, but a reformation of anthropology. A return to what we historically believed prior to the modern shift toward racialism. In other words, the novelty that is racialism should be rejected - like the Reformers rejected Rome's novelties. I don't insist on the universal authority of Scripture over all people, regardless of race - I insist on its universal authority over all people. Scripture knows nothing of race, or racialism. Race is not merely "nothing but a divisive social construct" - it is an aberrant anthropology, anachronistically eisegeted into the text of Scripture - and no, Galatians 3 doesn't commend a "post-racial" anything - because race is foreign to the text. As such, post-racial is equally eisegetical.

I don't think that's what Apostle Paul was getting at. There is definitely a sense of priority that must be given to our "in Christ" identity. Few passages of Scripture state this truth better than Galatians 3:28. Still, it is unlikely that Apostle Paul's intention was to flatten Christians' genders and races into an amorphous identity. Wasn't it Paul who said that he became all things to all people that he might win some? Wasn't it Paul who gave specific commands to Jews as Jews, Gentiles as Gentiles, slaves as slaves, masters as masters, men as men, and women as women? In Galatians specifically, Paul's teaching on justification is that it is offered to people of all cultures. The Gentiles did not have to stop being Gentiles to be justified. But one might object, "Well, but didn't the Jews have to give up an aspect of their culture? Didn't the gospel of justification require them to cease the Jewish custom of eating separately from the Gentiles?" To this, I would argue that this Jewish separation was actually a perversion of God's intention for Abraham's progeny. Abraham was to be the father of many nations. The true Jewish religion would've anticipated an eventual unity accompanied by diversity.

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Me either. No, it isn't "priority", it is "this is our identity." It is what you are being conformed to - His image, cf: Rom 8:29, Phl 3:21. Our identity is found in the Imago Dei, which is being. We are created in His image. The Fall damaged us. We are being transformed, in our union with Christ, and the regenerating power of the Spirit, into His image. We are being restored. I note that you insert the very thing you attempt to prove - the necessity of race - into the text you are trying to demonstrate the necessity of race from. This is a viciously circular argument. An argument that "races are no more" from this passage is terrible. Equally terrible is any argument which assumes that Paul was talking about races at all in this passage. Notice how this paragraph jumps from culture to a truly odd take on Jewish "perversion of God's intention for Abraham's progeny" to what the *true* Jewish religion "would have done." There's a scripture reference at the end we should look at, though.

Rev 5:9 says that Christ ἠγόρασας τῷ θεῷ ἐν τῷ αἵματί σου ἐκ πάσης φυλῆς καὶ γλώσσης καὶ λαοῦ καὶ ἔθνους.

Men from every: πάσης

Tribe: φυλῆς

Tongue: γλώσσης

People: λαοῦ

Nation: ἔθνους

Those are the Biblical terms, right? Where is race in there? Have you broken down those terms to see whether your category of "race" is described by any of them? Anything about transnational divisions of humanity delineated by similarities of physical characteristics? About a particular "minority group"? Which one describes race? Why? I really want to know how you substantiate the objective nature of a classification before you tell me that I should use it, you know? It's well and good to say "well it *is*" - but when you say "we *ought*, because it is", that is where things go off the rails. I'm not disputing that racism, or that the concept of race exists *on a pragmatic level* - as in, that they are used, and considered to be valid by somebody - maybe even most somebodies. I'm disputing whether race is, in fact, *something objectively true about humanity* - which, incidentally, language, the capacity for communication, *is*. I'm further disputing whether racialism, the classification of humanity into "races", is something we should do because it is true - or that we should, whether or not it is true - because it's pragmatic to do so.

Race, as a scientific classification, denominates the ability to interbreed. As humans, we can all interbreed. In

Scripture, we are all descended from Adam. Race, as a societal definition, could pretty much mean any number of things. However, it is used as if we should all know what is being referred to. It is presupposed, in fact, that there is such a thing as race, that it should identify us, and that it should have some measure of determinative power over us - in any number of ways.

My question is, why is this a presupposition? Where is this found in Scripture? This is a presuppositional apologetics site. As such, I'm going to challenge presuppositional commitments. It isn't good enough to say "but it's everywhere!" Is that good enough when someone tells you that atheistic naturalistic materialism (ie: the way things are - to the secularist product of cultural norms) is "everywhere", so you *should* just get with the program? Does *that* "is" bring about an "ought"? No, you challenge that presuppositional commitment, don't you? For example:

The myth of a post-secularist U.S. society has been exposed. America is an increasingly secularized society. Now say what you will about secularization as a social construct. The fact is that it pervades the American context. Its dominance colors the American reality. Ignoring secularism in the USA is impossible.

Is that a valid argument? How about this one.

The myth of a post-sexist U.S. society has been exposed. America is an increasingly sexist society. Now say what you will about sexism as a social construct. The fact is that it pervades the American context. Its dominance colors the American reality. Ignoring sexism in the USA is impossible.

Is that a valid argument? Sexism exists, therefore we *should* run with it? Revisionism exists, so we *should* run with it? How about naturalism? Marxism? Any other -ism you want to name? Racialism (the belief that the human species is naturally divided into distinct biological categories called "races." I would argue that it also encompasses the idea that societal cues based on physical appearance have also contributed to the consideration of a general division of humanity into nebulously "different" groupings on that basis, as distinct from any considered belief that biology plays a specific role. Opinion, after all, often has little to do with biology - and for many people, holding an uninformed opinion resting in "common knowledge" is sufficient for practical, everyday living.) is, from any objective standpoint, a dead end. That leaves a subjective standpoint - but you're telling me that we should define ourselves as human beings on the basis of a subjectivity? That needs an argument, don't you think? I would like us to be "post-racial" because we have rejected an unbiblical anthropology which incorporates modern subjectivist novelties, and have engaged in a reformation of that anthropology, complete with an apologetic against racialism.

Before anyone tells me anything else, I need to know some things. It's all well and good to say that "Reconciliation is incarnational," as Tisby does. We like our buzzwords. Intentional, relational, etc. However, what do

you *mean* when you say that? Sure, it's true as far as it goes that "[i]n Jesus Christ that promise of reconciliation has become a person. A person with whom we can have a relationship and thereby be reconciled to God." Yet, the next premise in Tisby's post is the following: "What is true of our reconciliation with God is true of our reconciliation across racial and ethnic lines." This premise is unargued. It is assumed.

It takes this form:

P1} x is true of Y

P2} ?

C} x is true of Z.

What is premise 2 that makes the conclusion valid? What is the "because" which is elided in the quotation above? What is true of... is true of... because... why? We aren't told. It is a *presuppositional commitment*. Why should we believe this to be true? Where in Scripture is this taught? How do you exegete this? Before you tell me how to engage in racial reconciliation, tell me what it is, and why I should believe it is true. If you know of anyone who argues this, I've yet to find it. Please point me to some argumentation for it. Please. On that note, let's return to Dr. Williams, as promised.

Back To Dr. Williams

On the same site he wrote the first piece, (and on which Tisby passionately exhorts us to toward racial reconciliation) Williams changes his mind somewhat on the subject of "racial reconciliation," within a year and a half of the publish date on his earlier piece I critiqued above. He writes, in his piece "[Gospel Reconciliation In Christ Is A Biblical Teaching](#)"; "I've recently been persuaded from my studies of ancient texts (both biblical and extra-biblical) and from my readings in critical race theory that when talking about the universal work of God in Christ to restore the cosmological unity between God and his creation, *[emphasis mine]* **Christians should not use the phrase "racial re-conciliation."** Instead, we should use the words "re-conciliation," "new creation," or "restoration," for these are all biblical categories. However, as I have argued in numerous places, arguments against using the term reconciliation to refer to the needed restoration between God and humanity are false and cannot withstand biblical exegesis."

Strangely, Dr. Williams seems to still be torn as to whether to use "the fictive racial construct that we've inherited," in his piece "[The Cruelty of The Color-Blind Theory Of Race in Evangelical Churches](#)." If you read through this article, his argument is *not* that race is a valid idea. His position is that *while* it is not, it's still something we have to deal with - and I agree with him on that score. We aren't being good apologists or theologians if we ignore what is around us. On the other hand, does it serve us, or the church, to pragmatically accept the "fiction" of race as a *fait*

accompli, in order to challenge racism? That is what one other author we've examined has said, after all. In fact, he says to embrace it, despite it being a modern social construct. His argument seems to be that in order to avoid "the racialized experiences of those marginalized", we have to "admit that racial identity often determines... and that one's race often serves as a means..." Now, I know that he isn't meaning to contradict himself by affirming that "one's own race" is an ontological truth - an identity - concerning the individuals in question - but that sort of phraseology does, unfortunately, fit the mold of the popular conception, and the "racialist narrative", that race does, in fact, exist as a biological difference - and perpetuates the myth, despite the author's "in principle" denial of it's truth. If, by our practice, we deny our principle, how are we not inconsistent? Further, the very same authors that accept CRT's conclusion that race is a *fictive* social construct are at the same time asking that there be "*racial* reconciliation". Does this mean that they want the reconciliation to be *equally fictive*? I don't see what other conclusion we are to draw, if they are to remain consistent. On the other hand, they may not be consistent. I'll hope to hear back from the authors we've dealt with, and discuss this further.

As a side note: Is CRT something to embrace? My assessment is no, but I'm never against someone looking into it for themselves. I will say this: those of you who have interacted with higher critical theories will find parallels here - as would be expected, given that CRT is a parallel development of German critical philosophy. View the material for yourselves.

I would go one step further than Williams and say, as a presuppositionalist, that we *first* have to challenge *racialism*. This isn't all we do, but if I am to take my own teaching elsewhere seriously, this is what I propose. Additionally, we have to revisit our *historic* anthropology and engage in the apologetic task *from* our own historic anthropology, and *counter* the modern challenges to that anthropology. This involves 1) *Having* a coherent anthropology as part of our systematic, and 2) Being able to *use* it in a systematic way. That's part of why I'm delving into this subject. I've said many times - theological precision proceeds from apologetic challenges. This is no exception to the rule. I'm glad that Dr. Williams revisited his assumptions from earlier. Now, he seems to more closely parallel Thabiti's comments concerning race from several years ago. I hope we can speak about the subject in the future.

In Thabiti's [famous T4G address in 2008](#), and his 2010 [9Marks article](#) I have referenced on Choosing Hats previously, he notes that his assistant Meg and a church member, Hugh, "share nationality, language (patois), and cultural patterns, but Meg is white and Hugh is black." He goes on to say "Conversely, both Edwin Machingambi and I are black, have African names, and speak a bit of the same language (Swahili), but we are not ethnically of the same group. Edwin is Zimbabwean and I am an American nationally, culturally, etc." He closes that section with this note: "as J. Daniel Hays points out, the ethnic diversity of the biblical world is far greater and much different than we imagine."

The Biblical Text, and Two Commentators

So, let's address our 3 primary passages next, as I promised. I am using Gill and Calvin because they are the two earliest (and in my opinion, best) two commentators on the entire Biblical text who are *also* systematic theologians. This is a common practice of mine on this site, and I see no reason to deviate from it. Their comments are, to the best of formatting constraints, reproduced, sans their use of Biblical languages or their internal or editorial footnotes. Those can be obtained easily, should you wish, as their commentaries are public domain in a great many places. I will cite the passage in the NASB (also my common practice), then follow up with Calvin's comments, then Gill's, verse-by-verse. I will highlight various sections I consider to be particularly important, with appropriate notation of my own emphasis, and break out of the quotations to provide my own commentary at a few points. This section of the paper is quite long, but I hope that it is valuable, their comments being collated in this fashion. Let's begin.

Colossians 1:18-23

He is also head of the body, the church; and He is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, so that He Himself will come to have first place in everything. For it was the [Father's] good pleasure for all the fullness to dwell in Him, and through Him to reconcile all things to Himself, having made peace through the blood of His cross; through Him, [I say], whether things on earth or things in heaven. And although you were formerly alienated and hostile in mind, [engaged] in evil deeds, yet He has now reconciled you in His fleshly body through death, in order to present you before Him holy and blameless and beyond reproach-- if indeed you continue in the faith firmly established and steadfast, and not moved away from the hope of the gospel that you have heard, which was proclaimed in all creation under heaven, and of which I, Paul, was made a minister. (NASB)

Calvin, Commentary, on Col. 1:18:

The head of the body. Having discoursed in a general way of Christ's excellence, and of his sovereign dominion over all creatures, he again returns to those things which relate peculiarly to the Church. Under the term head some consider many things to be included. And, unquestionably, he makes use afterwards, as we shall find, of the same metaphor in this sense -- that as in the human body it serves as a root, from which vital energy is diffused through all the members, so the life of the Church flows out from Christ, etc. (Colossians 2:19.) Here, however, in my opinion, he speaks chiefly of government. He shews, therefore, that it is Christ that alone has authority to govern the Church, that it is he to whom alone believers ought to have an eye, and on whom alone the unity of the body depends.

He is the beginning. As arche is sometimes made use of among the Greeks to denote the end, to which all things bear a relation, we might understand it as meaning, that Christ is in this sense the

end. I prefer, however, to explain Paul's words thus -- that he is the beginning, because he is the first-born from the dead; for in the resurrection there is a restoration of all things, and in this manner the commencement of the second and new creation, for the former had fallen to pieces in the ruin of the first man. As, then, Christ in rising again had made a commencement of the kingdom of God, he is on good grounds called the beginning; for then do we truly begin to have a being in the sight of God, when we are renewed, so as to be new creatures. He is called the first-begotten from the dead, not merely because he was the first that rose again, but because he has also restored life to others, as he is elsewhere called the first-fruits of those that rise again. (1 Corinthians 15:20.)

That he may in all things. From this he concludes, that supremacy belongs to him in all things. For if he is the Author and Restorer of all things, it is manifest that this honor is justly due to him. At the same time the phrase in omnibus (in all things) may be taken in two ways -- either over all creatures, or, in everything. This, however, is of no great importance, for the simple meaning is, that all things are subjected to his sway.

Gill, Commentary on Colossians 1:18

And he is the head of the body, the church

By "the church" is meant, not any particular congregated church, as the church at Colosse, or Corinth, or any other; but the whole election of grace, the general assembly and church of the firstborn, whose names are written in heaven in the Lamb's book of life; the church which Christ has given himself for, and has purchased with his blood, and builds on himself the rock, and will, at last, present to himself a glorious church without spot or wrinkle, or any such thing; this is compared to an human body, and therefore called "the body"; which is but one, consisting of many members in union with each other, set in their proper places in just symmetry and proportion to each other, and subservient to one another, and are neither more nor fewer; see (1 Corinthians 12:12-14) and of this body, the church, Christ is "the head"; he was the representative head of this body of elect men from all eternity, and in time; he is a political head of them, or in such sense an head unto them, as a king is to his subjects; he reigns in them by his Spirit and grace, and rules them by wholesome laws of his own enacting, and which he inscribes on their hearts, and he protects and defends them by his power; he is an economical head, or in such sense an head of them, as the husband is the head of the wife, and parents and masters are the heads of their families, he standing in all these relations to them; and he is to them what a natural head is to an human body; of all which (See Gill on 1 Corinthians 11:3). The Messiah is called one head, in (Hosea 1:11) ; which Jarchi explains by David their king, and Kimchi on the place says, this is the King Messiah:

who is the beginning;

which either denotes the eternity of Christ, who was not only in the beginning, and was set up from the beginning, from everlasting, but is also the beginning and the end; and who is, indeed, without beginning of days, or end of life: or his dominion; he is the principality, as the word may be rendered; he is the principality of principalities, the head of all principality and power, the angels; he is the Prince of the kings of the earth; he is King of saints; the kingdom of nature and providence is his, and the government of his people in a special manner is on his shoulders: or this may design his being the first cause of all things; he is the beginning of the creation of God; the efficient cause of all created beings; he is the beginning of the church, of which he is the head; as Eve was from Adam, so is the church from Christ; it is a body of his preparing, and a temple of his building, and where he sits as a priest on his throne, and has the government of it: the second number, wisdom, in the cabalistic tree of the Jews, is called "the beginning", as is the Logos, or Word, by Philo the Jew

the firstborn from the dead;

the first that rose from the dead by his own power, and to an immortal life; for, though others were raised before him, and by him, yet not to a state of immortality; the path of life, to an immortal life, was first shown to him as man; and who also is the firstfruits of them that sleep, and so the pledge and earnest of the future resurrection of the saints; and is both the efficient and exemplary cause of it; the resurrection of the dead will be by him as God, and according to his own, as man:

that in all [things] he might have the pre-eminence;

or might be the first and chief over all persons, angels, and men; having a superior nature, name, and place, than the former, and being the firstborn among many brethren designed by the latter: and in all things he is the first, and has the precedence and primacy; in sonship, no one is a Son in the sense he is; in election, he was chosen first, and his people in him; in the covenant, he is the surety, Mediator, and messenger of it, he is that itself; in his human nature, he is fairer than the children of men; in redemption, he was alone, and wrought it out himself; in life, he exceeded all others in purity, in doctrine, and miracles; and in dying he conquered death, and rose first from it; in short, he died, revived, and rose again, that he might be Lord both of dead and living; and he ought to have the pre-eminence and first place in the affections of our hearts, in the contemplations of our minds, in the desires of our souls, and in the highest praises of our lips.

Calvin, Commentary, Colossians 1:19

Because it hath pleased the Father that in him. With the view of confirming what he has declared respecting Christ, he now adds, that it was so arranged in the providence of God. And, unquestionably, in order that we may with reverence adore this mystery, it is necessary that we should be led back to that fountain. "This," says he, "has been in accordance with the counsel of God, that all

fullness may dwell in him." Now, he means a fullness of righteousness, wisdom, power, and every blessing. For whatever God has he has conferred upon his Son, that he may be glorified in him, as is said in John 5:20. He shews us, however, at the same time, that we must draw from the fullness of Christ everything good that we desire for our salvation, because such is the determination of God -- not to communicate himself, or his gifts to men, otherwise than by his Son. "Christ is all things to us: apart from him we have nothing." Hence it follows, that all that detract from Christ, or that impair his excellence, or rob him of his offices, or, in fine, take away a drop from his fullness, overturn, so far as is in their power, God's eternal counsel.

Gill, Commentary, Colossians 1:19

For it pleased [the Father]

The phrase, "the Father", is not in the original text, but is rightly supplied; since he is expressly mentioned in the context, as he who makes the saints meet to be partakers of the heavenly glory; who deliver, them from the power and dominion of sin, and translates them into the kingdom of his dear Son; and who, by Christ, reconciles all things to himself, (Colossians 1:12 Colossians 1:13 Colossians 1:20) , and whose sovereign will and pleasure it is,

that in him should all fulness dwell:

by which is meant, not the fulness of the deity, though it is read by some the fulness of the Godhead: which seems to be transcribed from (Colossians 2:9) ; but though all the perfections of God are in Christ, as eternity, omnipotence, omniscience, omnipresence, immutability, independence, and necessary existence, and every other, or he would not be equal with God; nor could all the fulness of the Godhead be said to dwell in him, should anyone be wanting; yet this is a fulness possessed by him, that does not spring from, nor depend upon the Father's good will and pleasure; but what he naturally and necessarily enjoys by a participation of the same undivided nature and essence with the Father and Spirit: nor is the relative fulness of Christ intended, which is his church, so called, (Ephesians 1:23) ; and will be so when all the elect are gathered in, and filled with all the gifts and graces of his Spirit, and are arrived to the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ; for though every believer dwells in Christ, and Christ in him, yet the church is not said to dwell in Christ, but Christ in the church; moreover, as yet she is not his fulness, at least in the sense she will be, and much less can she be said to be all fulness: nor is this to be understood of Christ's fulness of fitness and abilities, as God-man and Mediator, to perform his work and office as such; though this may be taken into the sense of the text as a part, yet is not the whole; but rather chiefly that dispensatory communicative fulness, which is, of the Father's good will and pleasure, put into the hands of Christ to be distributed to others, is here designed. There is a fulness of nature in Christ; the light of nature is

from him, and communicated by him to mankind; the blessings of nature are the blessings of his left hand, which he distributes to his people as he thinks fit; and all things in nature are subservient to his mediatorial kingdom and glory. There is a fulness of grace in him, out of which saints receive, and grace for grace, or a large abundance of it; the fulness of the spirit of grace, and of all the graces and gifts of the Spirit is in him; and of all the blessings of grace, as a justifying righteousness, pardon of sin, adoption, sanctification, even of all that grace that is implanted in regeneration, that is necessary to carry on and finish the good work upon the soul; there is a fulness of all light and life, of wisdom, and strength, of peace, joy, and comfort, and of all the promises of grace, both with respect to this world and that which is to come; and there is also a fulness of glory in him, not only the grace, but the glory of the saints, is laid up and hid with him, and is safe and secure in him: this is said to dwell in Christ, which implies its being in him; it is not barely in intention, design, and purpose, but it is really and actually in him, nor is it in any other; and hence it comes to be communicated to the saints: and it also denotes the continuance of it with him; it is an abiding fulness, and yields a continual daily supply to the saints, and will endure to the end of time, and be as sufficient for the last as the first believer; it is like the subject of it, the same yesterday, today, and for ever: and it also intends the safety of it: the saints' life both of grace and glory is hid with Christ, and is secure, it is out of the reach of men and devils, and can never be lost, or they deprived of it; and all this is owing not to any merits of men, to their faith and holiness, or good works, which are all the fruits of this fulness, but to the good will of God; "it pleased the Father" to place it here for them; it was owing to his good will to his Son, and therefore he puts all things into his hands; and to his elect in him, for, having loved them with an everlasting love, he takes everlasting care of them, and makes everlasting provision for them; it was his pleasure from all eternity to take such a step as this, well knowing it was not proper to put it into the hands of Adam, nor into the hands of angels, nor into their own at once; he saw none so fit for it as his Son, and therefore it pleased him to commit it unto him; and it is his good will and sovereign pleasure, that all grace should come through Christ, all communion with him here, and all enjoyment of him hereafter; which greatly enhances and sets forth the glory of Christ as Mediator, one considerable branch of which is, that he is full of grace and truth; this qualifies him to be the head of the church, and gives a reason, as these words be, why he has, and ought to have, the preeminence in all things.

Calvin, Commentary, Colossians 1:20

And by him to reconcile all things to himself. This, also, is a magnificent commendation of Christ, that we cannot be joined to God otherwise than through him. In the first place, let us consider that our happiness consists in our cleaving to God, and that, on the other hand, there is nothing more miserable than to be alienated from him. He declares, accordingly, that we are blessed through Christ

alone, inasmuch as he is the bond of our connection with God, and, on the other hand, that, apart from him, we are most miserable, because we are shut out from God. *[emphasis mine]* **Let us, however, bear in mind, that what he ascribes to Christ belongs peculiarly to him, that no portion of this praise may be transferred to any other. Hence we must consider the contrasts to these things to be understood -- that if this is Christ's prerogative, it does not belong to others.** For of set purpose he disputes against those who imagined that the angels were pacificators, through whom access to God might be opened up.

Making peace through the blood of his cross. He speaks of the Father, -- that he has been made propitious to his creatures by the blood of Christ. Now he calls it the blood of the cross, inasmuch as it was the pledge and price of the making up of our peace with God, because it was poured out upon the cross. For it was necessary that the Son of God should be an expiatory victim, and endure the punishment of sin, that we might be the righteousness of God in him. (2 Corinthians 5:21.) The blood of the cross, therefore, means the blood of the sacrifice which was offered upon the cross for appeasing the anger of God.

[emphasis mine] **In adding by him, he did not mean to express anything new, but to express more distinctly what he had previously stated, and to impress it still more deeply on their minds -- that Christ alone is the author of reconciliation, as to exclude all other means.** For there is no other that has been crucified for us. Hence it is he alone, by whom and for whose sake we have God propitious to us. [note: Discussion on angels elided for relevance]

Gill, Commentary, Colossians 1:20

And by him to reconcile all things to himself

This depends upon the preceding verse, and is to be connected with that phrase in it, it pleased the Father, (Colossians 1:19) ; and the sense is, that it was the good will and pleasure of God from all eternity, as to lay up all fulness in Christ for his chosen people, so to reconcile them to himself by him; and which is another reason why Christ is, and ought to be considered as the head of the church, whose reconciliation he has procured, and why he ought to have the chief place in all things, and among all persons. *[emphasis mine]* **Reconciliation supposes a former state of amity and friendship**, and in such an one man was originally with God; and a breach of that friendship, which was made and issued in real enmity in the heart of man; **and also a restoration to friendship again:** and *[emphasis mine]* **it is to be understood not of a reconciliation of God to men, which the Scriptures nowhere speak of, but of men to God; and is a reconciliation of them, not to the love of God, which his elect always shared in, but to the justice of God, offended by the transgression of a righteous law; and is indeed properly a reconciliation, atonement, and**

satisfaction for their sins, and so of their persons, and whereby all the perfections of God are reconciled to and agree with each other in the salvation of such sinners: now this takes its first rise from God the Father; it is owing to his sovereign good will and pleasure; he took the first step towards it; he knew what a state of enmity and rebellion his people would fall into; his thoughts ran upon their peace and reconciliation from everlasting; he called a council of peace about it, and in it drew the model of it; he entered into a covenant of peace with his Son, and, in consequence of it, sent him in the fulness of time to effect it, laying on him the chastisement of their peace; it was his pleasure that this affair of reconciliation should be brought about, not by the means of angels, in whom he could put no such trust and confidence, and who, though they rejoice at peace being made on earth, could never have effected it; *[emphasis mine]* **nor that it should be done by men, who have no knowledge of the way of it, no inclination to it, nor power to make it; but "by him", his Son Jesus Christ, whom he appointed and called to this work, and sent to do it; and who is therefore, in prophecy, before this reconciliation was actually made, styled "Shiloh", the Prince of peace, and the peace:** and this, when made, was made "to himself"; meaning either to Christ, in whom all the elect were gathered together, as in one head, *[emphasis mine]* **and were reconciled in one body, whether Jews or Gentiles, through him; or rather to God the Father, to whom they were enemies, yea, enmity itself, and to whom the satisfaction and atonement were made; it being his law that was broken, and his justice that was injured, and to whom they are always in Scripture said to be reconciled;** though not to the exclusion of the Son and Spirit, the one God with the Father: moreover, the sense of this phrase may be, that the reconciliation of the elect made by Christ, in a way of full satisfaction to law and justice, is to the glory of God, the glory of all his perfections; as of his grace and mercy, wisdom, power, and faithfulness, so of his righteousness and holiness: the means by which Christ has enacted it are, his sacrifice, sufferings, and death, expressed in the following clause;

having made peace through the blood of his cross.

[emphasis mine] **This was what man could not do, what Christ was appointed and sent to do, and what he was every way qualified for as God and man;** as man he had blood to shed, and could make reconciliation for sin in the nature which had sinned, and, as God, could draw nigh to his Father, and treat with him about terms of peace, and perform them; and so a fit daysman and Mediator between, God and man: this peace he has made by his "blood", that is, by the shedding of it, by his death as a sacrifice, which he underwent on the cross; partly to denote the shame, and chiefly to signify the curse he endured in the room of his people: all which shows the malignant nature of sin, the strictness of justice, and that peace is made in a way of full satisfaction, is upon honourable terms, will be lasting, as it is joyful, being attended with a train of blessings:

by him, [I say], whether [they be] things in earth, or things in heaven:

by which are intended not the whole universe and fabric of the world, all creatures and things, animate and inanimate, rational and irrational, which have been cursed for the sin of man, and have proved unfriendly to him, but, in consequence of redemption and reconciliation by Christ, will, as some think, in the time of the restitution of all things, be restored to their former state, and to their friendly use to mankind; nor elect men and elect angels, and their reconciliation together, *[emphasis mine]* **for the apostle is not speaking of the reconciling of these things together, but of the reconciling of them to God**, which though it is true of elect men, is not of elect angels, who never fell, and though they have confirming grace, yet not reconciling grace from Christ, which they never needed; *[emphasis mine]* **nor Jews and Gentiles, for though it is true that God was in Christ reconciling the world of the Gentiles, as well as of the Jews to himself, and the chosen of God among both are actually reconciled to God by the death of Christ, yet the one are never called things in heaven, or the other things on earth, in distinction from, and opposition to each other**; but rather all the elect of God are here meant, the family of God in heaven and in earth; all the saints that were then in heaven, when actual reconciliation was made by the blood of Christ, and who went thither upon the foot of peace, reconciliation, and redemption, to be made by his sacrifice and death; and all the chosen ones that were or should be on the face of the earth, until the end of time; all these were reconciled to God by Christ: and then the apostle proceeds particularly to mention the Colossians, as also being instances of this grace, good will, and pleasure of God by Christ.

Calvin, Commentary, Colossians 1:21

And whereas ye were formerly. The general doctrine which he had set forth he now applies particularly to them, that they may feel that they are guilty of very great ingratitude, if they allow themselves to be drawn away from Christ to new inventions. And this arrangement must be carefully observed, because the particular application of a doctrine, so to speak, affects the mind more powerfully. Farther, he leads their views to experience, that they may recognize in themselves the benefit of that redemption of which he had made mention. "You are yourselves a sample of that grace which I declare to have been offered to mankind through Christ. For ye were alienated, that is, from God. Ye were enemies; now ye are received into favor: whence comes this? It is because God, being appeased by the death of Christ, has become reconciled to you." At the same time, there is in this statement a change of person, for what he has previously declared as to the Father, he now affirms respecting Christ; for we must necessarily explain it thus, in the body of HIS flesh

The term *dianoias* (thought) I explain, as employed by way of amplification, as though he had said, that they were altogether, and in the whole of their mental system, alienated from God, that no one

may imagine, after the manner of philosophers, that the alienation is merely in a particular part, as Popish theologians restrict it to the lower appetites. "Nay," says Paul, "what made you odious to God, had taken possession of your whole mind." In fine, he meant to intimate, that man, whatever he may be, is wholly at variance with God, and is an enemy to him. The old interpreter renders it (sensus) sense. Erasmus renders it mentem, (mind.) I have made use of the term cogitationis, to denote what the French call intention. For such is the force of the Greek word, and Paul's meaning requires that it should be rendered so.

Farther, while the term enemies has a passive as well as active signification, it is well suited to us in both respects, so long as we are apart from Christ. For we are born children of wrath, and every thought of the flesh is enmity against God. (Romans 8:7.)

In wicked works. He shews from its effects the inward hatred which lies hid in the heart. For as mankind endeavor to free themselves from all blame, until they have been openly convicted, God shews them their impiety by outward works, as is more amply treated of in Romans 1:19. Farther, what is told us here as to the Colossians, is applicable to us also, for we differ nothing in respect of nature. There is only this difference, that some are called from their mother's womb, whose malice God anticipates, so as to prevent them from breaking forth into open fruits, while others, after having wandered during a great part of their life, are brought back to the fold. We all, however, stand in need of Christ as our peace maker, because we are the slaves of sin, and where sin is, there is enmity between God and men.

Gill, Commentary, Colossians 1:21

And you that were sometime alienated

The general blessing of grace and reconciliation, which belongs to the whole body of Christ, the church universal, all the elect of God, whether in heaven or in earth, is here particularly applied to the saints at Colosse, who were eminent instances of it; and that the free grace of God towards them in it might more illustriously appear, the apostle takes notice of what they were before the coming of Christ in the flesh, before the Gospel came among them, and while in a state of unregeneracy, as that they were "alienated": that is from God, not from his general presence, power, and providence, which reach to all his creatures, but from the life of God; see (Ephesians 4:18) ; from living agreeably to the will of God, being estranged from him who is the fountain of moral and spiritual, as well as natural life; from the law, the rule of life, and from a principle of life in themselves; and altogether disapproving of such a life, as contrary to their carnal affections and lusts: and which alienation from God greatly lay in their forsaking him, the one only and true God, and following and serving strange gods, not attending to the dictates and light of nature; and being destitute of a divine revelation, they went further and further off

from God, and from his people, worship, and ordinances; and were aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers to the covenants of promise; the source of all which was sin, and was owing to themselves: God did not alienate himself from them first; they alienated themselves from him; their sins separated between God and them, set them at a distance from him, and at enmity to him, and which very early appeared, for they were estranged from the womb:

and enemies in [your] mind by wicked works.

They were enemies to God, the true God, and were lovers and worshippers of idols; they were enemies to the being and perfections of God, as all men in a state of nature are; and more or less show it, by either denying there is a God, or wishing there was none, or fancying him to be such an one as themselves; or they dispute his sovereignty, deny his omniscience, arraign his justice and faithfulness, and despise the riches of his grace and goodness; they are enemies to his purposes, providences, and word; cannot bear that he should determine any thing concerning them or others; their eye is evil to him because he is good to others; they reply against him, they run upon him, and charge his decrees with unrighteousness and cruelty; murmur at and quarrel with the dispensations of his providence, as unequal and unjust; cast away the law of the Lord, will not be subject to it, and condemn the revelation of his will. They are enemies to Christ in one shape or another; either to his person, denying his proper deity, or real humanity; or to his offices, not hearkening to him as a prophet, trampling on his blood and sacrifice as a priest, and unwilling to have him to rule over them as a King; or to the way of salvation by him, of pardon by his blood, atonement by his sacrifice, justification by his righteousness, and acceptance with God through his person; or to his doctrines and ordinances, which are unsuitable to their vicious tastes, carnal affections, and appetites: they are enemies to the Spirit of Christ, by either denying his deity and personality, or by ridiculing the operations of his grace; or treating with contempt, and as foolish, everything of his, the Bible and all the truths contained in it, dictated by him. They are enemies to the people of God, exceeding mad against them, hate them and persecute them, reckon them the faith of the world, and the offscouring of all things, living in malice to them, and hateful and hating one another: and this enmity to everything divine and good is seated "in the mind"; the mind is not the object of this enmity, as some read the words, "to the mind": for the mind of a carnal man is enmity itself against God; but it is the subject of it, where it has its chief place, and from whence it proceeds, and shows itself in evil actions; and though the word "your" is not in the original text, it is rightly supplied; for the meaning is not that they were enemies "of his mind"; of the mind of the Lord, of his counsels and will, as some read and explain the words, though there is a truth in this, but in their own minds: so that not the body but the soul is the seat of this enmity; and not the inferior faculties of the soul only, the sensitive appetite and passions, but the understanding, the judgment and will, the more noble and rational powers of the soul; from hence spring all the malice and enmity expressed in word and actions: where then is man's free will to

that which is good? and hence it is that the mind stands in need of being renewed, enlightened, cleansed and sanctified, and renovation begins here, which is the effect of almighty power; for nothing else can remove the rooted enmity in the heart of men; and which, as deep and as secret as it is, sooner or later, in one way or another, shows itself "by wicked works"; and that frequently, as by loving what God hates, and hating what he loves; by omitting what he commands, and committing what he forbids; by maintaining friendship with the world, and by harbouring his professed enemies, and persecuting his dear friends; and by their wicked words, and evil lives and conversations; and by the various works of the flesh, which are manifest, some being more directly against God, others by which they wrong themselves, and others by which they injure their neighbours:

yet now hath he reconciled;

which may be understood either of the Father's reconciling them to himself by his Son; and so the words are a continuation of the account of the Father's grace, as to all the elect in general, so to the Colossians in particular, notwithstanding the black characters in which they stand described in their natural estate: or else of Christ's reconciling them to his Father, by the sacrifice of himself, which he voluntarily offered for them, though this was their case, and of enemies made them friends: and may be meant either of the impetration of reconciliation for them by his sufferings and death; or of the virtue and efficacy of it in the application of it; in the former sense the "now" refers to the coming of Christ into the world, and the time of his death, and the offering up of his body once for all, when peace and reconciliation were completely made at once for all God's elect; in the latter sense it refers to the time of the conversion of these Colossians, when Christ by his Spirit, in consequence of reconciliation made in the body of his flesh, *[emphasis mine]* **through death reconciled them to God; to his mind and will, to the way of salvation by himself, to the saints the excellent in the earth, to the Gospel and the ordinances of it, and to all his ways and worship.**

Calvin, Commentary, Colossians 1:22

In the body of his flesh. The expression is in appearance absurd, but the body of his flesh means that human body, which the Son of God had in common with us. He meant, therefore, to intimate, that the Son of God had put on the same nature with us, that he took upon him this vile earthly body, subject to many infirmities, that he might be our Mediator. When he adds, by death, he again calls us back to sacrifice. For it was necessary that the Son of God should become man, and be a partaker of our flesh, that he might be our brother: it was necessary that he should by dying become a sacrifice, that he might make his Father propitious to us.

That he might present us holy. Here we have the second and principal part of our salvation -- newness of life. For the entire blessing of redemption consists mainly in these two things, remission of sins, and

spiritual regeneration. (Jeremiah 31:33.) What he has already spoken of was a great matter, that righteousness has been procured for us through the death of Christ, so that, our sins being remitted, we are acceptable to God. *[emphasis mine]* **Now, however, he teaches us, that there is in addition to this another benefit equally distinguished -- the gift of the Holy Spirit, by which we are renewed in the image of God.** This, also, is a passage worthy of observation, as shewing that a gratuitous righteousness is not conferred upon us in Christ, without our being at the same time regenerated by the Spirit to the obedience of righteousness, as he teaches us elsewhere, that Christ is made to us righteousness and sanctification. (1 Corinthians 1:30.)

The former we obtain by a gratuitous acceptance; and the latter by the gift of the Holy Spirit, when we are made new creatures. There is however an inseparable connection between these two blessings of grace.

Let us, however, take notice, that this holiness is nothing more than begun in us, and is indeed every day making progress, but will not be perfected until Christ shall appear for the restoration of all things. For the Coelestinians and the Pelagians in ancient times mistakingly perverted this passage, so as to shut out the gracious benefit of the remission of sins. For they conceived of a perfection in this world which could satisfy the judgment of God, so that mercy was not needed. Paul, however, does not by any means shew us here what is accomplished in this world, but what is the end of our calling, and what blessings are brought to us by Christ.

Gill, Commentary, Colossians 1:22

In the body of his flesh through death

Or "through his death", as the Alexandrian copy and some others, and all the Oriental versions, read. *[emphasis mine]* **These words express the means by which that reconciliation was made, which in the virtue and efficacy of it was applied particularly to these Colossians at their conversion whereby their minds were actually reconciled to God, as "in" or "by the body of his flesh";** that is, by the offering up of his body on the accursed tree, in which he bore the sins of his people, and made reconciliation for them: and it is so called either to distinguish it from his mystical and spiritual body the church, of which he is the head before spoken of; or from his glorious and immortal body, as now raised and exalted at God's right hand; and to denote the truth of his human body, that it was a real fleshly body, consisting of flesh and blood as ours does, and the same with ours, and not an aerial, celestial bony, or a mere phantom; and also to signify the infirmity and mortality of it, being, excepting sin, in all points like to ours, and subject to death; and that it was in that body his Father prepared for him, and he assumed; and as he was clothed with it in the days of his

flesh, or mortal state, that he made reconciliation for the sins of his people, and that "through death" in it; even the death of the cross, by which he bore the penalty of the law, the curse of it, made satisfaction to justice, obtained life, abolished death, and destroyed him that had the power of it, and fixed a sure and lasting peace for all his saints; his end in which was,

to present you holy and unblamable, and unreprouable in his sight.

This presentation of the saints by Christ is either in his own sight, "before himself", as the Arabic version reads it; and is here in this present state, they being considered by him both as sanctified and as justified; he taking delight in the graces of his Spirit, and the exercise of them on himself, though imperfect, and in them as clothed with his spotless righteousness, in which they are perfectly comely, all fair, and without spot: or in the latter day glory, the New Jerusalem church state; when the church will be as a bride prepared for her husband, will be brought into his presence in raiment of needlework, in fine linen clean and white, the righteousness of the saints, and be presented to himself a glorious church, without spot or wrinkle, or any such thing; or in the ultimate glory, when all the saints shall be for ever with him, continually before him, and in his sight; which is what his heart was set upon from everlasting, which he had in view in his sufferings and death, and still has in his prayers and preparations: or else this presentation is what has been or will be made before his Father, and in his sight; and which was partly done, when he gathered together all the elect in himself, and represented them on the cross, in the body of his flesh; and partly is now doing in heaven, where he appears in the presence of God for them, bears their names on his breastplate, presents their persons and their cases; and especially will be done at the last day, when he will deliver up the kingdom to the Father, and say, lo, I and the children thou hast given me: and who will be presented "holy" by him; he being their sanctification, and they having all their sins expiated by his sacrifice, and their persons washed and cleansed in his blood, and their hearts sanctified by his Spirit; which sanctification though it is imperfect in this life, yet will be completed by the author of it at death; without perfect holiness no man shall see God, or be presented in his sight: [emphasis mine] **and this is in consequence of the death of Christ and reconciliation by it and a fruit of electing grace, by which persons are chosen in Christ, that they should be holy and without blame; and as here, "unblamable and unreprouable": as they are, not now in themselves, but in Christ, as arrayed with his robe of righteousness and garments of salvation, being all glorious within, and their clothing of wrought gold, in which they will be introduced and presented to himself, and to his Father, faultless, with exceeding joy, and stand so before the throne, and that to all eternity.**

Calvin, Commentary, Colossians 1:23

If ye continue. Here we have an exhortation to perseverance, by which he admonishes them that all

the grace that had been conferred upon them hitherto would be vain, unless they persevered in the purity of the gospel. And thus he intimates, that they are still only making progress, and have not yet reached the goal. For the stability of their faith was at that time exposed to danger through the stratagems of the false apostles. Now he paints in lively colors assurance of faith when he bids the Colossians be grounded and settled in it. For faith is not like mere opinion, which is shaken by various movements, but has a firm steadfastness, which can withstand all the machinations of hell. Hence the whole system of Popish theology will never afford even the slightest taste of true faith, which holds it as a settled point, that we must always be in doubt respecting the present state of grace, as well as respecting final perseverance. He afterwards takes notice also of a relationship which subsists between faith and the gospel, when he says that the Colossians will be settled in the faith only in the event of their not falling back from the hope of the gospel; [emphasis mine] **that is, the hope which shines forth upon us through means of the gospel, for where the gospel is, there is the hope of everlasting salvation. Let us, however, bear in mind, that the sum of all is contained in Christ. Hence he enjoins it upon them here to shun all doctrines which lead away from Christ, so that the minds of men are otherwise occupied.**

Which ye have heard. As the false apostles themselves, who tear and rend Christ in pieces, are accustomed proudly to glory in the name of the gospel, and as it is a common artifice of Satan to trouble men's consciences under a false pretext of the gospel, that the truth of the gospel may be brought into confusion, Paul, on this account, expressly declares, that that was the genuine, that the undoubted gospel, which the Colossians had heard, namely, from Epaphras, that they might not lend an ear to doctrines at variance with it. He adds, besides, a confirmation of it, that it is the very same as was preached over the whole world. [emphasis mine] **It is, I say, no ordinary confirmation when they hear that they have the whole Church agreeing with them, and that they follow no other doctrine than what the Apostles had alike taught and was everywhere received.**

It is, however, a ridiculous boasting of Papists, in respect of their impugning our doctrine by this argument, that it is not preached everywhere with approbation and applause, inasmuch as we have few that assent to it. For though they should burst, they will never deprive us of this -- that we at this day teach nothing but what was preached of old by Prophets and Apostles, and is obediently received by the whole band of saints. For Paul did not mean that the gospel should be approved of by the consent of all ages in such a way that, if it were rejected, its authority would be shaken. He had, on the contrary, an eye to that commandment of Christ,

Go, preach the gospel to every creature; (Mark 16:15;)

which commandment depends on so many predictions of the Prophets, foretelling that the kingdom of

Christ would be spread over the whole world. What else then does Paul mean by these words than that the Colossians had also been watered by those living streams, which, springing forth from Jerusalem, were to flow out through the whole world? (Zechariah 14:8.)

We also do not glory in vain, or without remarkable fruit and consolation, that we have the same gospel, which is preached among all nations by the commandment of the Lord, which is received by all the Churches, and in the profession of which all pious persons have lived and died. It is also no common help for fortifying us against so many assaults, that we have the consent of the whole Church -- such, I mean, as is worthy of so distinguished a title. [emphasis mine] **We also cordially subscribe to the views of Augustine, who refutes the Donatists by this argument particularly, that they bring forward a gospel that is in all the Churches unheard of and unknown.** This truly is said on good grounds, for if it is a true gospel that is brought forward, while not ratified by any approbation on the part of the Church, it follows, that vain and false are the many promises in which it is predicted that the preaching of the gospel will be carried through the whole world, and which declare that the sons of God shall be gathered from all nations and countries, etc. (Hosea 1:10-11.) But what do Papists do? Having bid farewell to Prophets and Apostles, and passing by the ancient Church, they would have their revolt from the gospel be looked upon as the consent of the universal Church. Where is the resemblance? Hence, when there is a dispute as to the consent of the Church, let us return to the Apostles and their preaching, as Paul does here. Farther, lest any one should explain too rigidly the term denoting universality, Paul means simply, that it had been preached everywhere far and wide.

Of which I am made. He speaks also of himself personally, and this was very necessary, for we must always take care, that we do not rashly intrude ourselves into the office of teaching. He accordingly declares, that this office was appointed him, that he may secure for himself right and authority. And, indeed, he so connects his apostleship with their faith, that they may not have it in their power to reject his doctrine otherwise than by abandoning the gospel which they had embraced.

Gill, Commentary, Colossians 1:23

If ye continue in the faith

In the doctrine of faith which they had received and embraced; and in the grace of faith, and the exercise of it which was implanted in them; and in the profession of faith which they had made: not that the virtue and efficacy of Christ's blood, sufferings, and death, and reconciliation of their persons to God thereby, depended upon their faith, and abiding in it; but that faith and continuance in it were necessary means of their presentation in unblemished holiness and righteousness; for if they had not faith, or did not abide in it or if the good work of grace was not wrought upon their souls, and that performed until the day of Christ, they could not be presented holy and blameless: this shows the

necessity of the saints' final perseverance in faith and holiness, and is *[emphasis mine]* **mentioned with this view, to put them upon a concern about it, and to make use of all means, under divine grace, to enjoy it; and nothing could more strongly incline and move unto it, than the blessed effect of Christ's death, reconciliation and the end of it, to present the reconciled ones blameless; in order to which it is necessary they should hold on and out to the end: hence the Ethiopic version reads the words, not as a condition, but as an exhortation enforced by what goes before; "therefore be ye established in the faith":** it follows,

grounded and settled;

[emphasis mine] **not on the sandy foundation of man's own righteousness, and peace made by his own performances;** but upon the foundation and rock, Christ, against which the gates of hell cannot prevail; and so shall never finally and totally fall away, being rooted and built up in him, and established in the faith of him, in the doctrines of faith, respecting peace by his blood, justification by his righteousness, and life by his death; and so continue steadfast and immovable, always abounding in his work:

and [be] not moved away from the hope of the Gospel;

the hope of eternal life and happiness, which as set before us in the Gospel; which that gives a good and solid ground and foundation of, in the person, blood, and righteousness of Christ; and is the instrumental means, in the hand of the Spirit, of begetting to it, and of encouraging and increasing it: the law gives no hopes of eternal life to a poor sinner; it works wrath, and ministers death; there is nothing but a fearful looking for of judgment by it; but the Gospel encourages to hope in the Lord, from the consideration of rich mercy and plenteous redemption in him; and this hope of the Gospel is an anchor of the soul, sure and steadfast, and not to be let go; this confidence and rejoicing of the hope is to be kept firm unto the end:

which ye have heard;

that is, which Gospel they had heard from Epaphras their faithful minister, and that not only externally, but internally; they had heard it and believed it, and it had brought forth fruit in them; for it came to them not in word only, but in power; which is said in commendation of it, and to engage them to continue in it, and abide by it; as is also what follows:

[and] which was preached to every creature which is under heaven;

and therefore since it was the same which was everywhere preached, they might depend upon the truth of it, should have the greater value for it, and by no means relinquish it. This must be understood not of every individual creature, even human and rational, that was then, or had been in, the world; but that it had been, and was preached far and near, in all places all over the world, to the Gentiles as well

as to the Jews; who are sometimes styled "every creature", "the creature", "the whole creation", "all men" see (Mark 16:15) (Romans 8:19-22) (Titus 2:11) ; and of this, the first preaching of the Gospel by Peter after our Lord's resurrection, was an emblem and pledge, (Acts 2:14-36) ; and some time after that, the sound of all the apostles went into all the earth, and their words to the end of the world:

whereof I Paul am made a minister;

by Jesus Christ, who appeared unto him, and called, qualified, and sent him forth as such; and this is mentioned to encourage the Colossians to abide by the truths of the Gospel, since what they had heard and received were what were everywhere preached by the faithful ministers of the word; and particularly by the apostle, who was ordained to be a teacher and preacher of it to the Gentiles. The Alexandrian copy reads, "a preacher and an apostle, and a minister"; see (1 Timothy 2:7) .

Ephesians 2:11-22

Therefore remember that formerly you, the Gentiles in the flesh, who are called "Uncircumcision " by the so-called "Circumcision," [which is] performed in the flesh by human hands-- [remember] that you were at that time separate from Christ, excluded from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers to the covenants of promise, having no hope and without God in the world. But now in Christ Jesus you who formerly were far off have been brought near by the blood of Christ. For He Himself is our peace, who made both [groups into] one and broke down the barrier of the dividing wall, by abolishing in His flesh the enmity, [which is] the Law of commandments [contained] in ordinances, so that in Himself He might make the two into one new man, [thus] establishing peace, and might reconcile them both in one body to God through the cross, by it having put to death the enmity. AND HE CAME AND PREACHED PEACE TO YOU WHO WERE FAR AWAY, AND PEACE TO THOSE WHO WERE NEAR; for through Him we both have our access in one Spirit to the Father. So then you are no longer strangers and aliens, but you are fellow citizens with the saints, and are of God's household, having been built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus Himself being the corner [stone], in whom the whole building, being fitted together, is growing into a holy temple in the Lord, in whom you also are being built together into a dwelling of God in the Spirit. (NASB)

Calvin, Commentary, Ephesians 2:11

Wherefore remember. The apostle never once loses sight of his subject, marks it out clearly, and pursues it with increasing earnestness. He again exhorts the Ephesians to remember what their character had been before they were called. This consideration was fitted to convince them that they had no reason to be proud. [*emphasis mine*] **He afterwards points out the method of**

reconciliation, that they might rest with perfect satisfaction on Christ alone, and not imagine that other aids were necessary. The first clause may be thus summed up: "Remember that, when ye were uncircumcised, ye were aliens from Christ, from the hope of salvation, and from the Church and kingdom of God; so that ye had no friendly intercourse with God." The second may run thus: "But now ingrafted into Christ, ye are at the same time reconciled to God." What is implied in both parts of the description, and what effect the remembrance of it was fitted to produce on their minds, has been already considered.

Gentiles in the flesh. He first mentions that they had wanted the marks of God's people. Circumcision was a token by which the people of God were marked out and distinguished from other men: Uncircumcision was the mark of a profane person. Since, therefore, God usually connects his grace with the sacraments, their want of the sacraments is taken as an evidence that neither were they partakers of his grace. The argument, indeed, does not hold universally, though it does hold as to God's ordinary dispensations. Hence we find the following language:

"And the Lord God said, Behold, the man is become as one of us, to know good and evil: and now, lest he put forth his hand, and take also of the tree of life, and eat, and live for ever: therefore the Lord God sent him forth from the garden of Eden, to till the ground from whence he was taken. So he drove out the man." (Genesis 3:22,23)

Though he had devoured the whole tree, he would not, by merely eating it, have recovered the possession of life; but, by taking away the sign, the Lord took from him also life itself. Uncircumcision is thus held out to the Ephesians as a mark of pollution. By taking from the Ephesians the token of sanctification, he deprives them also of the thing signified.

Some are of opinion, that all these observations are intended to throw contempt on outward circumcision; but this is a mistake. At the same time, I acknowledge, that the qualifying clause, the Circumcision in the flesh made by hands, points out a twofold circumcision. The Jews were thus taught that they should no longer indulge in foolish boasting about the literal circumcision. The Ephesians, on the other hand, were instructed to abstain from all scruples on their own account, since the most important privilege--nay, the whole truth expressed by the outward sign--was in their possession. He calls it, Uncircumcision in the flesh, because they bore the mark of their pollution; but, at the same time, he suggests that their uncircumcision was no hinderance to their being spiritually circumcised by Christ.

The words may likewise be read in one clause, Circumcision in the flesh made by hands, or in two clauses: Circumcision in the flesh, meaning that it was carnal; made by hands, meaning that it was

done by the hand of man. This kind of circumcision is contrasted with that of the Spirit, or of the heart, (Romans 2:29,) which is also called the circumcision of Christ. (Colossians 2:11)

By that which is called. Circumcision may be viewed here either as a collective noun for the Jews themselves, or literally for the thing itself; and then the meaning would be, that the Gentiles were called Uncircumcision, because they wanted the sacred symbol, that is, by way of distinction. This latter sense is countenanced by the qualifying phrase; but the substance of the argument is little affected.

Gill, Commentary, Ephesians 2:11

Wherefore remember, that ye be in time past Gentiles in the flesh

This, with what follows in the next verse, the apostle puts the converted Ephesians in mind of, in order to magnify the grace of God in their conversion; and to humble them in a view of their former state and condition; and to teach them that they could never be saved by any works of theirs: particularly he would have them call to mind, that they were in "time past Gentiles"; *[emphasis mine]* **which does not so much regard the nation and country they were of**, for in that sense they were Gentiles still; but their state and condition; they had been very blind and ignorant, were Gentiles that knew not God; they had been very wicked and profligate sinners of the Gentiles; and they had been "Gentiles in the flesh": *[emphasis mine]* **not according to the flesh, or by birth, for so they were then**; but in the time of their unregeneracy they were carnal, and minded the things of the flesh, walked after it, and fulfilled the lusts, and did the works of it; particular respect seems to be had to their uncircumcision in the flesh, to which circumcision in the flesh is opposed in the next clause:

who are called uncircumcision by that which is called circumcision in the flesh made by hands;

that is, they were by way of reproach and contempt called uncircumcised persons; than whom none were more abominable to the Jews, and hated by them, who were called circumcised persons from that circumcision which is outward, in the flesh, in a particular part of the body; and which is done by the hands of a man, who was called "the circumciser"; which any one might be, except a Gentile; an Israelite adult and skilful was preferred; yet these were not circumcised persons with that circumcision that is inward, and is of the heart, in the Spirit, and is made without the hands of men, and by the Spirit and power of God.

Calvin, Commentary, Ephesians 2:12

That at that time ye were without Christ. He now declares that the Ephesians had been excluded, not

only from the outward badge, but from everything necessary to the salvation and happiness of men. As Christ is the foundation of hope and of all the promises, he mentions, first of all, that they were without Christ. But for him that is without Christ, there remains nothing but destruction. On Him the commonwealth of Israel was founded; and [*emphasis mine*] **in whom, but in Himself, could the people of God be collected into one holy society?**

A similar observation might be made as to the tables of the promise. On one great promise made to Abraham all the others hang, and without it they lose all their value:

"In thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed." (Genesis 22:18.)

Hence our apostle says elsewhere,

"All the promises of God in him are yea, and in him Amen." (2 Corinthians 1:20.)

Take away the covenant of salvation, and there remains no hope. I have translated *ton diathekon* by the tables, or, in ordinary legal phrase, the instruments. By solemn ritual did God sanction His covenant with Abraham and his posterity, that he would be their God for ever and ever. (Genesis 15:9.) Tables of this covenant were ratified by the hand of Moses, and intrusted, as a peculiar treasure, to the people of Israel, to whom, and not to the Gentiles, "pertain the covenants." (Romans 9:4.)

And without God in the world. But at no period were the Ephesians, or any other Gentiles, destitute of all religion. Why, then, are they styled (*atheoi*) Atheists? for (*atheos*) an Atheist, strictly speaking, is one who does not believe, and who absolutely ridicules, the being of a God. That appellation, certainly, is not usually given to superstitious persons, but to those who have no feeling of religion, and who desire to see it utterly destroyed. I answer, Paul was right in giving them this name, for he treated all the notions entertained respecting false gods as nothing; and with the utmost propriety do godly persons regard all idols as "nothing in the world." (1 Corinthians 8:4.) Those who do not worship the true God, whatever may be the variety of their worship, or the multitude of laborious ceremonies which they perform, are without God: they adore what they know not. (Acts 17:23.) Let it be carefully observed, that the Ephesians are not charged with (*atheismos*) Atheism, in the same degree as Diagoras, and others of the same stamp, who were subjected to that reproach. Persons who imagined themselves to be very religious are charged with that crime; for an idol is a forgery, an imposition, not a Divinity.

From what has been said, the conclusion will be easily drawn, that out of Christ there are none but idols. Those who were formerly declared to be without Christ, are now declared to be without God; as

John says,

"Whosoever hath not the Son, hath not the Father,"

(1 John 2:23;)

and again,

"Whosoever transgresseth, and abideth not in the doctrine of Christ, hath not God."

(2 John 1:9.)

Let us know, therefore, that all who do not keep this way wander from the true God. We shall next be asked, Did God never reveal himself to any of the Gentiles? I answer, no manifestation of God without Christ was ever made among the Gentiles, any more than among the Jews. It is not to one age only, or to one nation, that the saying of our Lord applies,

"I am the way;" for he adds, "no man cometh unto the Father but by me." (John 14:6.)

Gill, Commentary, Ephesians 2:12

That at that time ye were without Christ

Or separate from him: they were chosen in him and were preserved in him, and were redeemed by him before; but they were without any knowledge of him, faith in him, love to him, communion with him, or subjection to him, his Gospel, government, laws, and ordinances; and particularly they were without any promises of him, or prophecies concerning him, which were peculiar to the Jews; hence the Messiah is called "the Christ of Israel", and who as he was promised, so he was sent only to the lost sheep of the house, of Israel: hence it follows,

being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel;

[emphasis mine] **both from their civil and church state; the Gentiles might not dwell among them, nor have any dealings with them in things civil, unless they conformed to certain laws; nor might the Jews go into any, nor eat or converse with any, that were uncircumcised; so great an alienation and distance were there between these two people; and much less might they eat the passover and join with them in religious worship;** the word for "commonwealth" here used, Harpocratian says, is commonly used by Greek writers for a "democracy" though the original constitution of the Israelites was properly a "theocracy":

strangers to the covenants of promise;

to the covenant of circumcision given to Abraham; and to the covenant at Mount Sinai, made with

Israel; and to the dispensation of the covenant of grace to that people, sometimes called the first covenant and the old covenant, and which peculiarly belonged to them, (Romans 9:4) one copy reads, "strangers to the promises of the covenant"; which is natural enough; the Vulgate Latin version joins the word "promise" to the next clause, and reads,

having no hope of the promise

of the promised Messiah: "having no hope"; of the Messiah and salvation by him, of the resurrection of the dead, of a future state, and of eternal life; none that is sure and steadfast, that is purifying, and makes not ashamed; or which is a good hope through grace, is the gift of God, the fruit of his love, and the effect of his power; and this is to be in a miserable condition: Philo, the Jew, observes, that

``the Chaldeans call a man Enos, as if he only was truly a man that expects good things, and supports himself with good hopes; and adds, hence it is manifest that one without hope is not reckoned a man, but a beast in an human form; since he is destitute of hope, which is the property of the human soul;"

and without God in the world;

without the knowledge of God in Christ; without the image of God, which was defaced by sin; without the grace and fear of God; and without communion with him, and the worship of him; and while they were so they were in the world, among the men of it, and were a part of it, not being yet called out of it: the word signifies "atheists": so some of the Gentiles were in "theory", as they all were in practice; and they were by the Jews reckoned no other than "atheists"; it is a common saying with them

If I might interject at this point - Calvin and Gill make most of my points in their commentaries, but this one, perhaps, may benefit from a particular note that springs from our particular emphasis here at this site. The alienation in view - civil, ceremonial, cultural, ethnic, religious, and covenantal, is that of *antithesis*. The Gentile "at that time" was as yet a child of wrath - which is mentioned just above in Ephesians 2:3. Read the first section, and follow along quickly, if you would. You *were* dead, *formerly* walked, we too all *formerly* lived - But God - even when we were dead, made us alive, raised us up, seated us with Him, *so that*. This is a purpose phrase. He might show - grace. For - builds on the last - by grace you have been saved, through faith, not of yourselves. It is the gift of God; not as a result of works, so that no one may boast. For - builds on the last - we are His workmanship, created *in* Christ Jesus *for* good works, which God prepared beforehand *so that* we would walk in them. The alienation is that of antithesis - the reconciliation is that of Christ's atonement and the clothing of His people in His *alien* righteousness. We were at enmity, now we are at accord. We were separated from Christ, now we are united to Him.

But now in Christ Jesus. We must either supply the verb, now that ye have been received in Christ Jesus, or connect the word now with the conclusion of the verse, now through the blood of Christ, -- which will be a still clearer exposition. In either case, the meaning is, that the Ephesians, who were far off from God and from salvation, had been reconciled to God through Christ, and made nigh by his blood; for the blood of Christ has taken away the enmity which existed between them and God, and from being enemies hath made them sons.

Gill, Commentary, Ephesians 2:13

But now in Christ Jesus

Being openly and visibly in Christ, created in him, and become believers in him; as they were before secretly in him, as chosen and blessed in him before the foundation of the world:

ye who sometimes were far off;

who in their state of unregeneracy were afar off from God, and from his law, and from any spiritual knowledge of him and fellowship with him; and from Jesus Christ, and from the knowledge of his righteousness, and the way of salvation by him; and from the Spirit, and any acquaintance with the things of the Spirit, and from minding them, and from walking after him; and from the saints and people of God, and from any love to them, and communion with them; and from any solid hopes of happiness, or real peace and comfort; which distance was owing both to Adam's sin and to their own transgressions: it is an observation of a Jewish writer F1 on (Genesis 3:9) "where art thou?" he (God) knew where he was, but he said so to show him that he was (pxwrm) , "afar off from" God by his sin: see (Isaiah 59:2) , and yet

are made nigh by the blood of Christ:

so as to have nearness of access to and communion with God, Father, Son, and Spirit, and the saints, in virtue of the blood of Christ; which gives boldness and speaks peace; by which their persons are justified, the pardon of their sins is procured, reconciliation is made, and their garments are washed, and made white; and so they draw nigh with confidence by the faith of him.

Calvin, Commentary, Ephesians 2:14

For he is our peace. He now includes Jews in the privilege of reconciliation, and shows that, through one Messiah, all are united to God. This consideration was fitted to repress the false confidence of the Jews, who, despising the grace of Christ, boasted that they were the holy people, and chosen inheritance, of God. If Christ is our peace, all who are out of him must be at variance with God. What a beautiful title is this which Christ possesses, -- the peace between God and men! Let no one who

dwells in Christ entertain a doubt that he is reconciled to God.

Who hath made both one. This distinction was necessary. All intercourse with the Gentiles was held to be inconsistent with their own superior claims. To subdue this pride, he tells them that they and the Gentiles have been united into one body. Put all these things together, and you will frame the following syllogism: If the Jews wish to enjoy peace with God, they must have Christ as their Mediator. But Christ will not be their peace in any other way than by making them one body with the Gentiles. Therefore, unless the Jews admit the Gentiles to fellowship with them, they have no friendship with God.

And breaking down the middle wall of partition.[emphasis mine]**To understand this passage, two things must be observed. The Jews were separated, for a certain time, from the Gentiles, by the appointment of God; and ceremonial observances were the open and avowed symbols of that separation. Passing by the Gentiles, God had chosen the Jews to be a peculiar people to himself. A wide distinction was thus made, when the one class were "fellow-citizens and of the household" (Ephesians 2:19) of the Church, and the other were foreigners.** This is stated in the Song of Moses:

"When the Most High divided to the nations their inheritance, when he separated the sons of Adam, he set the bounds of the people according to the number of the children of Israel: for the Lord's portion is his people, Jacob is the lot of his inheritance." (Deuteronomy 32:8,9)

Bounds were thus fixed by God to separate [emphasis mine] **one people from the rest**; and hence arose the enmity which is here mentioned. A separation is thus made. The Gentiles are set aside. God is pleased to choose and sanctify the Jewish people, by freeing them from the ordinary pollution of mankind. Ceremonial observances were afterwards added, which, like walls, enclosed the inheritance of God, prevented it from being open to all or mixed with other possessions, and thus excluded the Gentiles from the kingdom of God.

But now, the apostle, says, the enmity is removed, and the wall is broken down. By extending the privilege of adoption beyond the limits of Judea, Christ has now made us all to be brethren. And so is fulfilled the prophecy,

"God shall enlarge Japheth, and he shall dwell in the tents of Shem." (Genesis 9:27)

One more point, since it's related to the last. Israel was "a chosen people" - as we, the Israel of God in the new covenant, are "a chosen people." We are the elect of God, those whom He has purchased for Himself. Everyone else, isn't. I know, that seems rather obvious to say - but the separation, the division in view here, is that of a binary.

You either are, or you are not. You are Israel, or not-Israel. This, again, is antithesis.

Additionally, you have to decide something for yourself when you read passages like the one that Calvin cites above. When you see "divides the nations according to their heritage" - are you reading that in racial terms, or in national terms? The word used there for nations is $\epsilon\lambda\lambda\eta$. For people, it is $\delta\mu\lambda$. There is a reason that you see particular terms crop up in translations fairly consistently. They are trying to translate consistently. As I'm trying to demonstrate, Calvin and Gill know nothing of "race". They use the historic categories of Biblical anthropology. When I cited Hodge earlier, he used "race" frequently. Why? Because he, unlike Calvin and Gill, lived in a time when his society had normalized that concept. Is this right, or beneficial? Or does it actually cause issues down the line?

My challenge to you is this: If nobody used the term, or what it signifies, prior to the same period wherein all of the abuses which race is infamous for were beginning to be justified by both (I would argue) the use *and* abuse of "race" as a concept - why don't you apply *Semper Reformanda* to **that** concept? If what I argue is true, *ad fontes* would necessitate the rejection of that term, the concept behind it (racialism) and require a concerted apologetic effort directed in that vein. Which, I would submit to you, I am engaging in right now. That's my thesis. But, back to the commentaries on the text.

Gill, Commentary, Ephesians 2:14

For he is our peace

The author of peace between Jew and Gentile: there was a great enmity of the Jew against the Gentile, and of the Gentile against the Jew; and chiefly on account of circumcision, the one being without it, and the other insisting on it, and branding one another with nicknames on account of it; but Christ has made peace between them by abrogating the ceremonial law, which was the occasion of the difference, and by sending the Gospel of peace to them both, by converting some of each, and by granting the like privileges to them all, as may be observed in the following verses: and [*emphasis mine*]**Christ is the author of peace between God and his people**; there is naturally in man an enmity to God; sin has separated chief friends; nor can man make his peace with God; what he does, or can do, will not do it; and what will, he cannot do; [*emphasis mine*]**Christ is the only fit and proper person for this work, being a middle person between both, and is only able to effect it, being God as well as man**; and so could draw nigh to God, and treat with him about terms of peace, and agree to them, and perform them; and which he has brought about by his blood, his sufferings and death; and which is made on honourable terms, by a full satisfaction to the law and justice of God; and so is a lasting one, and attended with a train of blessings: [*emphasis mine*]**moreover, Christ is the donor of peace, of external peace in his churches, and of internal peace of conscience, and of eternal peace in heaven: this is one of the names of the Messiah** with the Jews;

`` says R. Jose the Galilean, even the name of the Messiah is called "peace"; as it is said, (Isaiah 9:6) "the everlasting Father, the Prince of peace"; see (Micah 5:5) where it is said, "and this man shall be the peace"; which the Jewish writers understand of the Messiah:

who hath made both one;

[emphasis mine] Jews and Gentiles, one people, one body, one church; he united them together, and caused them to agree in one, and made them to be of one mind and judgment by the above methods; as well as he gathered them together in one, in one head, himself, who represented them all:

and hath broken down the middle wall of partition between us;

the ceremonial law, which was made up of many hard and intolerable commands, and distinguished, and divided, and kept up a division between Jews and Gentiles: so the Jews call the law a wall, "if she be a wall", (Song of Solomon 8:9) , "this is the law", say they: and hence we read of "the wall of the law"; and sometimes the phrase, a "partition wall", is used for a division or disagreement; so R. Benjamin says, that between the Karaites and Rabbanites, who were the disciples of the wise men, there was "a middle wall of partition"; a great difference and distance; and such there was between the Jew and Gentile, by reason of the ceremonial law; but Christ removed it, and made up the difference: the allusion seems to be to the wall which divided the court of Israel from the court of the Gentiles, in the temple, and which kept them at a distance in worship.

Calvin, Commentary, Ephesians 2:15

Having abolished in his flesh the enmity. The meaning of Paul's words is now clear. The middle wall of partition hindered Christ from forming Jews and Gentiles into one body, and therefore the wall has been broken down. ***[emphasis mine] The reason why it is broken down is now added -- to abolish the enmity, by the flesh of Christ. The Son of God, by assuming a nature common to all, has formed in his own body a perfect unity.***

Even the law of commandments contained in ordinances. What had been metaphorically understood by the word wall is now more plainly expressed. The ceremonies, by which the distinction was declared, have been abolished through Christ. What were circumcision, sacrifices, washings, and abstaining from certain kinds of food, but symbols of sanctification, reminding the Jews that their lot was different from that of other nations; just as the white and the red cross distinguish the French of the present day from the inhabitants of Burgundy. ***[emphasis mine] Paul declares not only that the Gentiles are equally with the Jews admitted to the fellowship of grace, so that they no longer***

differ from each other, but that the mark of difference has been taken away; for ceremonies have been abolished. If two contending nations were brought under the dominion of one prince, he would not only desire that they should live in harmony, but would remove the badges and marks of their former enmity. When an obligation is discharged, the handwriting is destroyed, -- a metaphor which Paul employs on this very subject in another Epistle. (Colossians 2:14.)

Some interpreters, -- though, in my opinion, erroneously, -- connect the words, in ordinances, with abolished, making the ordinances to be the act of abolishing the ceremonies. This is Paul's ordinary phrase for describing the ceremonial law, in which the Lord not only enjoined upon the Jews a simple rule of life, but also bound them by various statutes. It is evident, too, that Paul is here treating exclusively of the ceremonial law; for the moral law is not a wall of partition separating us from the Jews, but lays down instructions in which the Jews were not less deeply concerned than ourselves. This passage affords the means of refuting an erroneous view held by some, that circumcision and all the ancient rites, though they are not binding on the Gentiles, are in force at the present day upon the Jews. On this principle there would still be a middle wall of partition between us, which is proved to be false.

That he might make in himself.[emphasis mine] **When the apostle says, in himself, he turns away the Ephesians from viewing the diversity of men, and bids them look for unity nowhere but in Christ. To whatever extent the two might differ in their former condition, in Christ they are become one man. But he emphatically adds, one new man,** intimating (what he explains at greater length on another occasion) that

"neither circumcision, nor uncircumcision, availeth anything," (Galatians 6:15,)

but that "a new creature" holds the first and the last place. The principle which cements them is spiritual regeneration. If then we are all renewed by Christ, let the Jews no longer congratulate themselves on their ancient condition, but let them be ready to admit that, both in themselves and in others, Christ is all.

Gill, Commentary, Ephesians 2:15

Having abolished in his flesh the enmity

The ceremonial law, as appears by what follows,

even the law of commandments contained in ordinances;

which consisted of many precepts, and carnal ordinances; and is so called because it was an

indication of God's hatred of sin, by requiring sacrifice for it; and because it was an occasion of stirring up the enmity of the natural man, it being a burden and a weariness to the flesh, by reason of its many and troublesome rites; and because it was the cause of enmity between Jew and Gentile: the Jews say, that Sinai, the mount on which the law was given, signifies "hatred"; and that it is so called because from it descended, "hatred" or "enmity" to the nations of the world: now this Christ abolished, "in his flesh", or by it; not by his incarnation, but by the sacrifice of his flesh, or human nature, and that as in union with his divine nature; but not until he had fulfilled it in himself, which was one end of his coming into the world; and then he abolished it, so as that it ought not to be, and so as that it is not, and of no use and service; and that because it was faulty and deficient, weak and unprofitable, as well as intolerable; and because there was a change in the priesthood; and because it was contrary to a spirit of liberty, the great blessing of the Gospel; *[emphasis mine]* **and that there might be a reconciliation and a coalition between Jew and Gentile, as follows:**

for to make in himself of twain one new man, so making peace;
which explains what is meant before by making both one; and expresses the strictness of the union between Jew and Gentile, they became as one man; and points at the manner in which they became so strictly united; and that is by being made new men, or new creatures, by having a work of grace upon their souls, and so baptized into one body, and made to drink of one and the same Spirit; the foundation of which union is in himself; for Jew and Gentile, male and female, bond and free, are all one in Christ Jesus; he is the cornerstone in which they all meet, and the head to which the whole body is joined.

Calvin, Commentary, Ephesians 2:16

And that he might reconcile both. The reconciliation between ourselves which has now been described is not the only advantage which we derive from Christ. We have been brought back into favor with God. The Jews are thus led to consider that they have not less need of a Mediator than the Gentiles. Without this, neither the Law, nor ceremonies, nor their descent from Abraham, nor all their dazzling prerogatives, would be of any avail. We are all sinners; and forgiveness of sins cannot be obtained but through the grace of Christ. *[emphasis mine]* **He adds, in one body, to inform the Jews, that to cultivate union with the Gentiles will be well-pleasing in the sight of God.**

By the cross. The word cross is added, to point out the propitiatory sacrifice. Sin is the cause of enmity between God and us; and, until it is removed, we shall not be restored to the Divine favor. It has been blotted out by the death of Christ, in which he offered himself to the Father as an expiatory victim. There is another reason, indeed, why the cross is mentioned here, as it is through the cross that all ceremonies have been abolished. Accordingly, he adds, slaying the enmity thereby. These words,

which unquestionably relate to the cross, may admit of two senses, -- either that Christ, by his death, has turned away from us the Father's anger, [emphasis mine] **or that, having redeemed both Jews and Gentiles, he has brought them back into one flock. The latter appears to be the more probable interpretation, as it agrees with a former clause, abolishing in his flesh the enmity.** (Ephesians 2:15.)

Note the first bolded section. I did that to jump it out at you. It would be tempting to say "aha!" and slip back into the racist mindset, and say "there! racial reconciliation!" One problem. He says union, not reconciliation. What jumps out at me there? This passage.

"I do not ask on behalf of these alone, but for those also who believe in Me through their word; that they may all be one; even as You, Father, [are] in Me and I in You, that they also may be in Us, so that the world may believe that You sent Me. The glory which You have given Me I have given to them, that they may be one, just as We are one; I in them and You in Me, that they may be perfected in unity, so that the world may know that You sent Me, and loved them, even as You have loved Me." - John 17:20-23

In His high priestly prayer, the unity of the brethren is said to be a sign to the world. See also the beginning of Eph 4, where we are told to have "unity of the Spirit, in the bond of peace." The same peace, incidentally, just mentioned in 2:14 and 15 - and about to be mentioned again in 17. This is the already/not yet of the Christian life.

We *have* unity, and we *have* peace - but we *seek* unity, and *seek* peace in our sanctification. Hence, of the Spirit. See also in the next section re: reconciliation with others - note the context following "and this is made." See just before: The Gentiles could not be reconciled together with them without the abrogation of it: and this reconciliation is made to God. The commentators have a certain way of speaking - that is why I am putting so much up here for you to look at. You don't get the style, or the personality out of a writer unless you have a decent body of text to deal with.

Gill, Commentary, Ephesians 2:16

And that he might reconcile both unto God

This is another end of the abrogation of the ceremonial law: *[emphasis mine]* **the Jews had run up a long score against the ceremonial law, as well as against the moral law; and Christ by fulfilling it for them, and thereby abrogating it, reconciled them; and the Gentiles could not be reconciled together with them, without the abrogation of it: and this reconciliation of them is made to God, who was the person offended; and who yet first set on foot a reconciliation, in which his glory is greatly concerned; and reconciliation with others depends upon reconciliation with him: and this is made**

in one body by the cross;

by which "body" is meant, the human body of Christ, which the Father prepared for him, and he assumed, and that [emphasis mine] **in order to make reconciliation for his people; and is said to be "one" body, because it was in one and the same body, which he reconciled both Jews and Gentiles unto God, and in or by one sacrifice of that body; reconciliation being so effectually made by it that there is no need of a reiteration: or the sense is, he reconciled them into "one body"; into one mystical body, the church, of which he is head;** and this he did "by the cross", that is, by his blood shed on the cross, or by his suffering the death of the cross; which shows that reconciliation is made in a way of satisfaction to the law and justice of God, by Christ's bearing the penalty of the law, and suffering the strokes of justice on the cross; and expresses the efficacy of his blood and sacrifice, and the greatness of his condescension and love:

having slain the enmity thereby;

the ceremonial law, as before; and the slaying it is the same with abolishing it; unless the enmity between God and man is meant, which was slain by removing the cause of it, sin; and which laid a foundation for the slaying of it in the hearts of his people in regeneration, when sin is made odious to them, and [emphasis mine] **they are reconciled to God's way of salvation; hence being slain in both senses, peace with God can never be broken.**

Calvin, Commentary, Ephesians 2:17

And came and preached peace.[emphasis mine] **All that Christ had done towards effecting a reconciliation would have been of no service, if it had not been proclaimed by the gospel; and therefore he adds, that the fruit of this peace has now been offered both to Jews and to Gentiles. Hence it follows, that to save Gentiles as well as Jews was the design of our Savior's coming, as the preaching of the gospel, which is addressed indiscriminately to both, makes abundantly manifest.** The same order is followed in the second Epistle to the Corinthians.

"He hath committed to us the word of reconciliation. Now, then, we are ambassadors for Christ. For he hath made him to be sin for us who knew no sin." (2 Corinthians 5:18-21.)

Salvation through the death of Christ is first announced, and a description is afterwards given of the manner in which Christ communicates to us himself and the benefit of his death. But [emphasis mine] **here Paul dwells chiefly on this circumstance, that Gentiles are united with Jews in the Kingdom of God. Having already represented Christ as a Savior common to both, he now speaks of them as companions in the gospel.** The Jews, though they possessed the law, needed the gospel also; and God had bestowed upon the Gentiles equal grace. Those therefore whom

"God hath joined together, let no man put asunder." (Matthew 19:6.)

No reference to distance of place is conveyed by the words afar off and nigh. The Jews, in respect of the covenant, were nigh to God. The Gentiles, so long as they had no promise of salvation, were afar off-- were banished from the kingdom of God.

And preached peace; not indeed by his own lips, but by the apostles. It was necessary that Christ should rise from the dead, before the Gentiles were called to the fellowship of grace. Hence that saying of our Lord,

"I am not sent but to the lost sheep of the house of Israel." (Matthew 15:24.)

The apostles were forbidden, while he was still in the world, to carry their first embassy to the Gentiles.

"Go not into the way of the Gentiles, and into any city of the Samaritans, enter ye not. But go rather to the lost sheep of the house of Israel." (Matthew 10:5,6,)

His apostles were afterwards employed as trumpets for proclaiming the gospel to the Gentiles. What they did, not only in his name, and by his command, but as it were in his own person, is justly ascribed to none other than himself. We too speak as if Christ himself exhorted you by us. (2 Corinthians 5:20)

The faith of the gospel would be weak indeed, were we to look no higher than to men. Its whole authority is derived from viewing men as God's instruments, and hearing Christ speak to us by their mouth. *[emphasis mine]* **Observe here, the gospel is the message of peace, by which God declares himself to be reconciled to us, and makes known his paternal love. Take away the gospel, and war and enmity continue to subsist between God and men; and, on the other hand, the native tendency of the gospel is, to give peace and calmness to the conscience, which would otherwise be tormented by distressing alarm.**

Gill, Commentary, Ephesians 2:17

And came and preached peace to you which were afar off,

Which is to be understood not of Christ's coming in the flesh; for when he came in the flesh, he came only to the Jews that were nigh, and preached the Gospel in his own personal ministry to them, and not to the Gentiles, who are the persons afar off; (Ephesians 2:12 Ephesians 2:13) but of his coming by his Spirit in the ministry of his apostles, to whom he gave a commission after he *[emphasis mine]* **had made peace and reconciliation by the blood of his cross**, to go into all the world and preach the Gospel to the Gentiles in the furthest parts of the earth; and on whom he bestowed gifts, qualifying them for such service, and succeeded them in it by his power and grace: and *[emphasis*

mine] the subject of their ministry was peace, Christ who is our peace, and peace made by his blood, and the Gospel of peace, which declares both these; and it is the means of making persons of peaceable dispositions; its doctrines and promises, when powerfully applied, give peace to distressed minds, and quiet to doubting saints; and it shows the way to eternal peace:

and to them that were nigh;

to the Jews, to whom the Gospel of peace was preached in the first place, not only by Christ and his apostles, before his death; but by his apostles after his resurrection, and after the commission was given to preach it to the Gentiles; though they are mentioned last, because the apostle was speaking to Gentiles; and this also verifies what Christ says, the first shall be last, and the last first: the Alexandrian copy, some others, and the Vulgate Latin and Ethiopic versions, read "peace", in this clause, as in the former; the apostle seems to have respect to (Isaiah 57:19) a like description and distinction of Jews and Gentiles may be observed in the writings of the Jews; so they say,

“the Israelites are near unto the holy King, and the rest of the nations are far from him.”

Calvin, Commentary, Ephesians 2:18

For through him we both have access. This is an argument from the fact, that we are permitted to draw near to God. But it may be viewed also as an announcement of peace; for wicked men, lulled into a profound sleep, sometimes deceive themselves by false notions of peace, but are never at rest, except when they have learned to forget the Divine judgment, and to keep themselves at the greatest possible distance from God. [*emphasis mine*] **It was necessary, therefore, to explain the true nature of evangelical peace**, which is widely different from a stupefied conscience, from false confidence, from proud boasting, from ignorance of our own wretchedness. It is a settled composure, which leads us not to dread, but to desire and seek, the face of God. Now, it is Christ who opens the door to us, yea, who is himself the door. (John 10:9.) As this is a double door thrown open for the admission both of Jews and Gentiles, we are led to view God as exhibiting to both his fatherly kindness. He adds, by one Spirit; who leads and guides us to Christ, and "by whom we cry, Abba, Father," (Romans 8:15,) for hence arises the boldness of approach. Jews had various means of drawing near to God; now all have but one way, to be led by the Spirit of God.

Gill, Commentary, Ephesians 2:18

For through him we both have an access,

That is, both Jews and Gentiles; the Arabic version reads, "we both factions": [*emphasis mine*] **being**

made one, and reconciled unto God, and having the Gospel of peace preached to both, they have through Christ freedom of access and boldness in it:

by one Spirit unto the Father:

they may come to God as the Father of spirits, and of mercies, who has made their souls or spirits, and bestowed his mercies on them in great abundance; and as the Father of Christ, and as their God and Father in Christ: and the rather they should consider him in this relation to them, in order to command in them a reverence and fear of him; to secure a freedom and liberty in their approach to him; and to encourage an holy boldness, and a fiducial confidence in him; and to teach them submission to his will: and their access to him is "through" Christ, who has made peace for them, and atonement for their sins; who has satisfied law and justice, and brought in an everlasting righteousness for them; so that there is nothing lies in their way to hinder them; and besides, he takes them as it were by the hand, and leads them into the presence of his Father, and presents their petitions for them, on whose account they have both audience and acceptance with God: and this access is also "by one Spirit"; the "Holy Spirit", as the Ethiopic version reads; and who is necessary in access to God, as a spirit of adoption, to enable and encourage souls to go to God as a father; and as a spirit of supplication, to teach both how to pray, and for what, as they should; and as a free spirit to give them liberty to speak their minds freely, and pour out their souls to God; and as a spirit of faith to engage them to pray in faith, and with holy boldness, confidence, and importunity; and he is said to be "one", both with respect to the persons to and by whom access is had, the Father and Christ, for he is the one and the same Spirit of the Father and of the Son; and with respect to the persons who have this access, Jews and Gentiles, who as they make up one body, are actuated and directed by, and drink into one and the same Spirit: hence this access to God is of a spiritual kind; it is a drawing nigh to God with the heart, and a worshipping him in spirit; and is by faith, and may be with freedom, and should be, with reverence, and ought to be frequent; and is *[emphasis mine]* **a peculiar privilege that belongs to the children of God; and who have great honour bestowed upon them, to have access to God at any time, as their Father, through Christ the Mediator, and under the influence, and by the direction and assistance of the Holy Spirit: this is a considerable proof of a trinity of persons in the Godhead, of their deity and distinct personality.**

Calvin, Commentary, Ephesians 2:19

Now therefore ye are no more strangers. The Ephesians are now exclusively addressed. They were *[emphasis mine]* **formerly strangers from the covenants of promise, but their condition was now changed.** They were foreigners, but God had made them citizens of his church. The high value of that honor which God had been pleased to bestow upon them, is expressed in a variety of

language. They are first called fellow-citizens with the saints, -- next, of the household of God, -- and lastly, stones properly fitted into the building of the temple of the Lord. The first appellation is taken from the comparison of the church to a state, which occurs very frequently in Scripture. Those who were formerly profane, and utterly unworthy to associate with godly persons, have been raised to distinguished honor in being admitted to be members of the same community with Abraham, -- with all the holy patriarchs, and prophets, and kings, -- nay, with the angels themselves. To be of the household of God, which is the second comparison, suggests equally exalted views of their present condition. God has admitted them into his own family; for the church is God's house.

Gill, Commentary, Ephesians 2:19

Now therefore ye are no more strangers.

Alluding to the name, "a stranger", by which the Jews called the Gentiles; meaning that they were not now strangers to God, to the grace of God, the love of God, and communion with him, nor to the throne of his grace; nor to Christ, to his person, his work and office, to his righteousness, to his voice, and to believing in him; nor to the Holy Spirit, as an enlightener, a comforter, the spirit of adoption, and as a seal and earnest of future glory; nor to their own hearts, the corruption and deceitfulness of them; nor to the devices of Satan; nor to the covenant of grace, its blessings and promises:

and foreigners:

in the commonwealth of Israel, in the church of God;

but fellow citizens with the saints:

the city they belong to is either the church below, which is the city of God, of his building, and where he dwells, of which Christ is the foundation, which is strongly fortified with the walls and bulwarks of salvation, is delightfully situated by the river of divine love, and is endowed with various privileges; or heaven above, which is a city of God's preparing and building also, and where he has his residence, and which is the habitation of angels and saints; of this city in either sense saints are citizens; such who are saints by separation, who are set apart by the Father's grace, and by imputation, or through Christ's being made sanctification to them, and by the regenerating grace of the blessed Spirit; and these, as they have a right to a name and a place in the church on earth, have also their citizenship in heaven; and which they have not by birth, nor by purchase, but by the free grace of God, which gives them both a right and a meetness; and believing Gentiles are upon equal foot of grace and privilege with believing Jews:

and of the household of God:

and which is sometimes called the household of faith, the church of God consisting of believers, the

family in heaven and in earth named of Christ; in which family or household God is the Father, Christ is the firstborn, ministers are stewards; and here are saints of various growth and size, some fathers, some young men, some children: and to this family all believers belong, whether Gentiles or Jews; and which they come into, not by birth, nor by merit, but by adopting grace; and happy are they that belong to this city and house! they are freed from all servitude and bondage; they can never be arrested, or come into condemnation; they have liberty of access to God, and share in the fulness of grace in Christ; they are well taken care of; they are richly clothed, and have plenty of provisions; and will never be turned out, and are heirs of a never fading inheritance.

Calvin, Commentary, Ephesians 2:20

And are built. The third comparison illustrates the manner in which the Ephesians, and all other Christians are admitted to the honor of being fellow-citizens with the saints and of the household of God. They are built on the foundation, -- they are founded on the doctrine, of the apostles and prophets. We are thus enabled to distinguish between a true and a false church. This is of the greatest importance; for the tendency to error is always strong, and the consequences of mistake are dangerous in the extreme. No churches boast more loudly of the name than those which bear a false and empty title; as may be seen in our own times. To guard us against mistake, the mark of a true church is pointed out.

[emphasis mine] **Foundation, in this passage, unquestionably means doctrine; for no mention is made of patriarchs or pious kings, but only of those who held the office of teachers, and whom God had appointed to superintend the edification of his church. It is laid down by Paul, that the faith of the church ought to be founded on this doctrine.** What opinion, then, must we form of those who rest entirely on the contrivances of men, and yet accuse us of revolt, because we embrace the pure doctrine of God? But the manner in which it is founded deserves inquiry; for, in the strict sense of the term, *[emphasis mine]* **Christ is the only foundation. He alone supports the whole church. He alone is the rule and standard of faith. But Christ is actually the foundation on which the church is built by the preaching of doctrine;** and, on this account, the prophets and apostles are called builders. (1 Corinthians 3:10.) Nothing else, Paul tells us, was ever intended by the prophets and apostles, than to found a church on Christ.

We shall find this to be true, if we begin with Moses; for "Christ is the end of the law," (Romans 10:4,) and the sum of the gospel. Let us remember, therefore, that if we wish to be reckoned among believers, we must place our reliance on no other: if we wish to make sure progress in the knowledge of the Scriptures, to him our whole attention must be directed. The same lesson is taught, when we consult the word of God as contained in the writings of the prophets and apostles. To shew us how we

ought to combine them, their harmony is pointed out; for they have a common foundation, and labor jointly in building the temple of God. Though the apostles have become our teachers, the instruction of the prophets has not been rendered superfluous; but one and the same object is promoted by both.

I have been led to make this remark by the conduct of the Marcionites in ancient times, who expunged the word prophets from this passage; and by that of certain fanatics in the present day, who, following their footsteps, exclaim loudly that we have nothing to do with the law and the prophets, because the gospel has put an end to their authority. The Holy Spirit everywhere declares, that he has spoken to us by the mouth of the prophets, and demands that we shall listen to him in their writings. This is of no small consequence for maintaining the authority of our faith. *[emphasis mine]* **All the servants of God, from first to last, are so perfectly agreed, that their harmony is in itself a clear demonstration that it is one God who speaks in them all. The commencement of our religion must be traced to the creation of the world. In vain do Papists, Mahometans, and other sects, boast of their antiquity, while they are mere counterfeits of the true, the pure religion.**

Jesus Christ, himself is the chief corner-stone Those who transfer this honor to Peter, and maintain that on him the church is founded, are so void of shame, as to attempt to justify their error by quoting this passage. They hold out that Christ is called the chief corner-stone, by comparison with others; and that there are many stones on which the church is founded. But this difficulty is easily solved. Various metaphors are employed by the apostles according to the diversity of circumstances, but still with the same meaning. In writing to the Corinthians, Paul lays down an incontestable proposition, that "no other foundation can be laid." (1 Corinthians 3:11.) He does not therefore mean, that Christ is merely a corner, or a part of the foundation; for then he would contradict himself. What then? *[emphasis mine]* **He means that Jews and Gentiles were two separate walls, but are formed into one spiritual building. Christ is placed in the middle of the corner for the purpose of uniting both, and this is the force of the metaphor.** What is immediately added shews sufficiently that he is very far from limiting Christ to any one part of the building.

Gill, Commentary, Ephesians 2:20

And are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets

The prophets of the Old Testament, and the apostles of the New, who agree in laying ministerially the one and only foundation, Jesus Christ; for not the persons of the apostles and prophets, nor their doctrines merely, are here meant; but Christ who is contained in them, and who is the foundation on which the church, and all true believers are built: he is the foundation of the covenant of grace, of all the blessings and promises of it, of faith and hope, of peace, joy, and comfort, of salvation and eternal happiness; on this foundation the saints are built by Father, Son, and Spirit, as the efficient causes,

and by the ministers of the Gospel as instruments: these lie in the same common quarry with the rest of mankind, and are singled out from thence by efficacious grace; they are broken and hewn by the word and ministers of it, as means; and are ministerially laid on Christ the foundation, and are built up thereon in faith and holiness; yea, private Christians are useful this way to build up one another:

Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner stone;

[emphasis mine] which cements and knits together angels and men, Jews and Gentiles, Old and New Testament saints, saints above, and saints below, saints on earth, in all ages and places, and of every denomination; and which is the beauty and glory, as well as the strength of the building, which keeps all together; and Christ is the chief, the headstone of the corner, and who is superior to angels and men. This phrase is used by the Jews to denote excellency in a person; so a wise scholar is called (hnyf Nba) , "a cornerstone"; F9 see (Psalms 118:22) (Isaiah 28:16) (Zechariah 10:4) . It may be rendered, "the chief cornering-stone"; it being such an one that is a foundation stone, as well as a cornerstone; and reached unto, and lay at the bottom of, and supported the four corners of the building; for the foundation and corner stone in this spiritual building, is one and the same stone, Christ: it is said of the temple of Latona, at Buto, in Egypt, that it was made "of one stone", as Herodotus an eyewitness of it, attests.

Calvin, Commentary, Ephesians 2:21

In whom all the building groweth. If this be true, what will become of Peter? When Paul, in writing to the Corinthians, speaks of Christ as a "Foundation," he does not mean that the church is begun by him and completed by others, but draws a distinction arising out of a comparison of his own labors with those of other men. It had been his duty to found the church at Corinth, and to leave to his successors the completion of the building.

"According to the grace of God which is given to me, as a wise master-builder, I have laid the foundation, and another buildeth on it." (1 Corinthians 3:10.)

With respect to the present passage, he conveys the instruction, that all who are fitly framed together in Christ are the temple of the Lord. There is first required a fitting together, that believers may embrace and accommodate themselves to each other by mutual intercourse; otherwise there would not be a building, but a confused mass. ***[emphasis mine] The chief part of the symmetry consists in unity of faith. Next follows progress, or increase. Those who are not united in faith and love, so as to grow in the Lord, belong to a profane building, which has nothing in common with the temple of the Lord.***

Groweth unto an holy temple. Individual believers are at other times called "temples of the Holy Ghost," (1 Corinthians 6:19; 2 Corinthians 6:16,) but here all are said to constitute one temple. In both cases the metaphor is just and appropriate. *[emphasis mine]* **When God dwells in each of us, it is his will that we should embrace all in holy unity, and that thus he should form one temple out of many. Each person, when viewed separately, is a temple, but, when joined to others, becomes a stone of a temple; and this view is given for the sake of recommending the unity of the church.**

Gill, Commentary, Ephesians 2:21

In whom all the building fitly framed together

This building is to be understood of all the saints, and people of God; of the whole universal church, which is God's building; and is a building of a spiritual nature, and will abide for ever: and this is fitly framed together; it consists of various parts, as a building does; some saints are comparable to beams, some to rafters, others to pillars and these are joined and united to one another, and are set in an exact symmetry and proportion, and in a proper subserviency to each other; and so as to make for the good, the strength, and beauty of the whole. And it all centres in Christ; he has a great concern in this building; he is the master builder, and the foundation and cornerstone; and it being knit together in him,

groweth unto an holy temple in the Lord:

it grows by an accession of new stones, or of souls called by grace, and added to it; for this building is not yet openly and visibly completed, as it will be; in order to which the ministry of the word, and administration of ordinances are continued; and this will be in the latter day, when the number of God's elect, among Jews and Gentiles, shall be gathered in: and this growth may be understood also of an increase of those, who are openly laid in the building; of their spiritual growth into their head, Christ; and of an, increase of grace in them; which the word and ordinances are means of, under a divine blessing: and this building grows unto an "holy temple", the Gospel church state, called a "temple", in allusion to the temple at Jerusalem; whose materials were stones made ready and hewn, before they were brought thither; and whose magnificence, beauty, and glory, were very great; and it was the place of public worship, and of the divine abode, and was a very significant emblem of the church of God; see (2 Corinthians 6:16) , which is an "holy" one, set apart for holy uses, and internally sanctified by the Spirit of God; and which is discovered by external holiness of life, and conversation in the members of it: and this is said to be "in the Lord"; which phrase may refer to the word "groweth", and denotes that growth and increase, both of persons and grace, the church has in, and from the Lord Jesus Christ; or to the word "holy", and intimates, that the holiness of the church, and every

member of it, is also in and from the Lord; or to the word "temple", which is built for him to dwell in.

Calvin, Commentary, Ephesians 2:22

In whom ye also are builded together, or in whom also Be Ye Builded together. The termination of the Greek verb, sunoikodomeisthe, like that of the Latin, coedificamini, does not enable us to determine whether it is in the imperative or indicative mood. The context will admit either, but I prefer the latter sense. It is, I think, an exhortation to the Ephesians to grow more and more in the faith of Christ, after having been once founded in it, and thus to form a part of that new temple of God, the building of which through the gospel was then in progress in every part of the world.

Through the Spirit. [emphasis mine] **This is again repeated for two reasons:** first, to remind them that all human exertions are of no avail without the operation of the Spirit; and secondly, to point out the superiority of the spiritual building to all Jewish and outward services.

Gill, Commentary, Ephesians 2:22

In whom you also are builded together

As the church universal, so every particular church is a building that is compact together, in and upon Christ, as the church at Ephesus was: God is the builder of it; Christ is the foundation; true believers are the proper materials; the door, or entrance into it, is Christ, and faith in him; the ministers of the Gospel are pillars in it; the ordinances are its windows; its furniture is of various sorts, there are vessels of small, and of great quantity; and its provisions are large and entertaining. [emphasis mine] **A church is a building compact together; it consists of many parts; and these are joined together, by agreement, and are knit and cemented in love; and being thus joined together, they are designed for social worship, and their great concern should be to edify one another.** The phrase, "in whom", may either refer to the holy temple before spoken of, the church universal, of which a particular church is a part; or to Christ, who is the master builder, by whom they are built together, and the foundation on whom they are built, and the cornerstone in whom they meet and are united. And the end of their being thus built together is, for an habitation of God through the Spirit; which may be understood of God the Father, since he is distinguished from Christ, in whom, and from the Holy Spirit, through whom, they are built for this purpose, though not to the exclusion of either of them; for a particular church is an habitation of Father, Son, and Spirit: and it being the habitation of God, shows his great grace and condescension, and the great value and regard he has for it; and this makes it a desirable, delightful, and pleasant habitation to the saints; and hence it is a safe and a quiet one, and they are happy that dwell in it; and hither should souls come for the enjoyment of the divine presence: and whereas it is said to be such through the Spirit; hence it

appears, that the Spirit is concerned with the other two persons in the building of it; and that hereby it becomes a spiritual house; and is, through his grace, a fit habitation for the holy God to dwell in; and that God dwells in his churches by his Spirit.

2nd Corinthians 5:17-21

Therefore if anyone is in Christ, [he is] a new creature; the old things passed away; behold, new things have come. Now all [these] things are from God, who reconciled us to Himself through Christ and gave us the ministry of reconciliation, namely, that God was in Christ reconciling the world to Himself, not counting their trespasses against them, and He has committed to us the word of reconciliation. Therefore, we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God were making an appeal through us; we beg you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God. He made Him who knew no sin [to be] sin on our behalf, so that we might become the righteousness of God in Him. (NASB)

Calvin, Commentary, 2nd Corinthians 5:17

Therefore if any man is in Christ. As there is something wanting in this expression, it must be supplied in this way -- "If any one is desirous to hold some place in Christ, that is, in the kingdom of Christ, or in the Church let him be a new creature " By this expression he condemns every kind of excellence that is wont to be in much esteem among men, if renovation of heart is wanting. "Learning, it is true, and eloquence, and other endowments, are valuable, and worthy to be honored; but, where the fear of the Lord and an upright conscience are wanting, all the honor of them goes for nothing. Let no one, therefore, glory in any distinction, inasmuch as the chief praise of Christians is self-renunciation."

Nor is this said merely for the purpose of repressing the vanity of the false apostles, but also with the view of [*emphasis mine*] **correcting the ambitious judgments of the Corinthians, in which outward disguises were of more value than real sincerity -- though this is a fault that is common to almost all ages. For where shall we find the man that does not attach much more importance to show, than to true holiness?** Let us, therefore, keep in view this admonition -- that all that are not renewed by the Spirit of God, should be looked upon as nothing in the Church, by whatever ornaments they may in other respects be distinguished.

Old things are passed away. When the Prophets speak of the kingdom of Christ, they foretell that there will be new heavens and a new earth, (Isaiah 65:17,) meaning thereby, that all things will be changed for the better, until the happiness of the pious is completed. As, however, Christ's kingdom is spiritual, this change must take place chiefly in the Spirit, and hence it is with propriety that he begins with this. There is, therefore, an elegant and appropriate allusion, when Paul makes use of a

commendation of this kind, for the purpose of setting forth the value of regeneration. Now by old things he means, the things that are not formed anew by the Spirit of God. Hence this term is placed in contrast with renewing grace. The expression passed away, he uses in the sense of fading away, as things that are of short duration are wont to fall off, when they have passed their proper season. Hence it is only the new man, that flourishes and is vigorous in the kingdom of Christ.

Gill, Commentary, 2nd Corinthians 5:17

Therefore if any man be in Christ

There's a secret being in Christ from everlasting; so all that are loved by him, espoused unto him, chosen and preserved in him, to whom he was a covenant head, surety, and representative, are in him, united to him, and one with him; not in such sense as the Father is in him, and the human nature is in him, but as husband and wife, and head and members are one: and there is an open being in Christ at conversion, when a man believes in Christ, and gives up himself to him; faith does not put a man into Christ, but makes him appear to be in him: and such an one "is a new creature"; or, as some read it, "let him be a new creature": who understand being in Christ to be by profession, and the sense this, whoever is in the kingdom or church of Christ, who professes himself to be a Christian, ought to be a new creature: the Arabic version reads it, "he that is in the faith of Christ is a new creature". All such who are secretly in Christ from everlasting, though as yet some of them may not be new creatures, yet they shall be sooner or later; and those who are openly in him, or are converted persons, are actually so; they are a new "creation", as the words may be rendered: (hvdx hyrb) , "a new creation", is a phrase often used by the Jewish doctors, and is applied by the apostle to converted persons; and designs not an outward reformation of life and manners, but *[emphasis mine]* **an inward principle of grace, which is a creature, a creation work, and so not man's, but God's; and in which man is purely passive, as he was in his first creation; and this is a new creature, or a new man, in opposition to, and distinction from the old man, the corruption of nature; and because it is something anew implanted in the soul, which never was there before; it is not a working upon, and an improvement of the old principles of nature, but an implantation of new principles of grace and holiness; here is a new heart, and a new spirit, and in them new light and life, new affections and desires, new delights and joys; here are new eyes to see with, new ears to hear with, new feet to walk, and new hands to work and act with:**

old things are passed away:

the old course of living, the old way of serving God, whether among Jews or Gentiles; the old legal righteousness, old companions and acquaintance are dropped; and all external things, as riches, honours, learning, knowledge, former sentiments of religion, are relinquished:

behold, all things are become new;

there is a new course of life, both of faith and holiness; a new way of serving God through Christ by the Spirit, and from principles of grace; a new, another, and better righteousness is received and embraced; new companions are sought after, and delighted in; new riches, honours, glory, a new Jerusalem, yea, new heavens, and a new earth, are expected by new creatures: or the sense of the whole may be this, if any man is entered into the kingdom of God, into the Gospel dispensation, into a Gospel church state, which seems to be the sense of the phrase "in Christ", in (Galatians 3:28) (5:6) (6:15) he is become a new creature, or is got into a new creation, as it were into a new world, [*emphasis mine*] **whether he be a Jew or a Gentile; for with respect to the former state of either, "old things are passed away"; if a Jew, the whole Mosaic economy is abolished; the former covenant is waxen old, and vanished away; the old ordinances of circumcision and the passover are no more; the daily sacrifice is ceased, and all the other sacrifices are at an end, Christ, the great sacrifice, being offered up; the priesthood of Aaron is antiquated, there is a change of it, and of the whole law; the observance of holy, days, new moons and sabbaths, is over; the whole ceremonial law is at end; all the shadows of it are fled and gone, the things they were shadows of being come by Christ, the sum and substance of them; and there is no more a serving God in the oldness of the letter, but in the newness of the Spirit: and if a Gentile, all the former idols he worshipped he turns from, and his language is, "what have I to do any more with idols? or what agreement hath the temple of God with idols?" all former sacrifices, superstitious rites and ceremonies, with which he worshipped them, are relinquished by him; with all other Heathenish customs, rules, and methods of conduct he had been used to: "behold, all things are become new"; to the one, and to the other; the Gospel dispensation is a new state of things; a new form of church state is erected, not national, as among the Jews, but congregational, consisting of persons gathered out of the world, and anew embodied together; new ordinances are appointed, which were never in use before, as baptism and the Lord's supper; a new and living way is opened by the blood of Christ into the holiest of all, not by the means of slain beasts, as among the Jews, nor by petty deities as with the Gentiles; a new commandment of love is enjoined all the followers of the Lamb; and another name is given them, a new name, which the mouth of the Lord their God has named, not of Jews nor Gentiles, but of Christians; and new songs are put into their mouths, even praise to God: in short, the Gospel church state seems to be, as it were, a new creation, and perhaps is meant by the new heavens and new earth, (Isaiah 65:15 Isaiah 65:17) as well as those who are the proper members of it, are new creatures in the sense before given.**

All things are of God. He means, all things that belong to Christ's kingdom. "If we would be Christ's, we must be regenerated by God. Now that is no ordinary gift." He does not, therefore, speak here of creation generally; but of the grace of regeneration, which God confers peculiarly upon his elect, and he affirms that it is of God -- not on the ground of his being the Creator and Artificer of heaven and earth, [*emphasis mine*] **but inasmuch as he is the new Creator of the Church, by fashioning his people anew, according to his own image.** Thus all flesh is abased, and believers are admonished that they must now live to God, inasmuch as they are a new creature. (2 Corinthians 5:17.) This they cannot do, unless they forget the world, as they are also no longer of the world, (John 17:16,) because they are of God

Who hath reconciled us. Here there are two leading points -- the one relating to the reconciliation of men with God; and the other, to the way in which we may enjoy the benefit of this reconciliation. Now these things correspond admirably with what goes before, for as the Apostle had given the preference to a good conscience above every kind of distinction, (2 Corinthians 5:11,) he now shows that the whole of the gospel tends to this. He shows, however, at the same time, the dignity of the Apostolical office, that the Corinthians may be instructed as to what they ought to seek in him, whereas they could not distinguish between true and false ministers, for this reason, that nothing but show delighted them. [*emphasis mine*] **Accordingly, by making mention of this, he stirs them up to make greater proficiency in the doctrine of the gospel.** For an absurd admiration of profane persons, who serve their own ambition rather than Christ, originates in our not knowing, what the office of the preaching of the gospel includes, or imports.

I now return to those two leading points that are here touched upon. The first is -- that God hath reconciled us to himself by Christ This is immediately followed by the declaration -- Because God was in Christ, and has in his person accomplished reconciliation. The manner is subjoined -- By not imputing unto men their trespasses Again, there is annexed a second declaration -- Because Christ having been made a sin-offering for our sins, has procured righteousness for us. The second part of the statement is -- that [*emphasis mine*] **the grace of reconciliation is applied to us by the gospel, that we may become partakers of it. Here we have a remarkable passage, if there be any such in any part of Paul's writings.** Hence it is proper, that we should carefully examine the words one by one.

The ministry of reconciliation [*emphasis mine*] **Here we have an illustrious designation of the gospel, as being an embassy for reconciling men to God.** It is also a singular dignity of ministers -- that they are sent to us by God with this commission, so as to be messengers, and in a manner sureties. This, however, is not said so much for the purpose of commending ministers, as with a view

to the consolation of the pious, that as often as they hear the gospel, they may know that God treats with them, and, as it were, stipulates with them as to a return to his grace. Than this blessing what could be more desirable? Let us therefore bear in mind, that this is the main design of the gospel -- that whereas we are by nature children of wrath, (Ephesians 2:3,) we may, by the breaking up of the quarrel between God and us, be received by him into favor. Ministers are furnished with this commission, that they may bring us intelligence of so great a benefit, nay more, may assure us of God's fatherly love towards us. Any other person, it is true, might also be a witness to us of the grace of God, but Paul teaches, that this office is specially intrusted to ministers. When, therefore, a duly ordained minister proclaims in the gospel, that God has been made propitious to us, he is to be listened to just as an ambassador of God, and sustaining, as they speak, a public character, and furnished with rightful authority for assuring us of this.

Gill, Commentary, 2nd Corinthians 5:18

And all things are of God

A man's being brought into a Gospel church state is of God; the causing all old things to pass away, whether in the Jewish or Gentile world, is of God; the shaking of the heavens and the earth, and the removing of those things that are shaken, the abrogation of the ceremonial law, the putting an end to all the Mosaic rites and sacrifices, the ejection of Satan out of the Heathen temples, and the abolition of Gentilism, with every thing else that comes under the names of old, and new, are of God: it is he that causes old things to pass away, and makes all things new, see (Revelation 21:1 Revelation 21:5) . Moreover, as all things in the old creation are from him, all creatures owe their beings to him, are supported in them by him, and all are made for his pleasure, and his glory so all things in the new creation are of him; the work of renovation itself is his; all the grace that is implanted in regeneration comes from him: nothing is of the creature, or to be ascribed to it. All things in redemption are of him; he drew the plan of it, called his Son to be the Redeemer, appointed and sent him as such; and particularly that branch of it, reconciliation, is of him:

who hath reconciled us to himself by Jesus Christ.

The work of reconciliation, or making atonement for sin, is ascribed to the Father; not that he is the author of it, for it is properly Christ's work; but because he took the first step towards it: he formed the scheme of it; he set forth his Son in his purposes and decrees to be the propitiary sacrifice; he assigned him this work in council and covenant, in promise and in prophecy, and sent him to effect it; therefore he is said to do it "by" him; that is, by his blood and sacrifice, by his sufferings and death, to which, and to which alone, the Scriptures ascribe our peace and reconciliation: and this is made to "himself": as being the party offended, whose law was broken, against whom sin was committed, and

whose justice required and demanded satisfaction:

and hath given to us the ministry of reconciliation;

which is the Gospel of peace, the word which preaches, publishes and declares, peace made by the blood of Christ; which is a gift to ministers, and a blessing to the people. The free grace of God greatly appears in this matter; God the Father sets this work of reconciliation on foot, Christ has brought it about, and the ministers of the Gospel publish it.

Calvin, Commentary, 2nd Corinthians 5:19

God was in Christ. Some take this as meaning simply -- God reconciled the world to himself in Christ; but the meaning is fuller and more comprehensive -- first, that God was in Christ; and, secondly, that he reconciled the world to himself by his intercession. It is also of the Father that this is affirmed; for it were an improper expression, were you to understand it as meaning, that the divine nature of Christ was in him. The Father, therefore, was in the Son, in accordance with that statement --

I am in the Father, and the Father in me. (John 10:38.)

Therefore he that hath the Son, hath the Father also. For Paul has made use of this expression with this view -- that we may learn to be satisfied with Christ alone, because in him we find also God the Father, as he truly communicates himself to us by him. [*emphasis mine*] **Hence the expression is equivalent to this -- "Whereas God had withdrawn to a distance from us, he has drawn near to us in Christ, and thus Christ has become to us the true Emmanuel, and his coming is God's drawing near to men."**

The second part of the statement points out the office of Christ -- his being our propitiation, (1 John 2:2,) because out of Him, God is displeased with us all, inasmuch as we have revolted from righteousness. [*emphasis mine*] **For what purpose, then, has God appeared to men in Christ? For the purpose of reconciliation -- that, hostilities being removed, those who were aliens, might be adopted as sons.** Now, although Christ's coming as our Redeemer originated in the fountain of Divine love towards us, yet until men perceive that God has been propitiated by the Mediator, there must of necessity be a variance remaining, with respect to them, which shuts them out from access to God. On this point we shall speak more fully ere long.

Not imputing to them. Mark, in what way men return into favor with God -- when they are regarded as righteous, by obtaining the remission of their sins. For so long as God imputes to us our sins, He must of necessity regard us with abhorrence; for he cannot be friendly or propitious to sinners. But this statement may seem to be at variance with what is said elsewhere -- that, we were loved by Him

before the creation of the world, (Ephesians 1:4,) and still more with what he says, (John 3:16,) that the love, which he exercised towards us was the reason, why He expiated our sins by Christ, for the cause always goes before its effect. I answer, that we were loved before the creation of the world, but it was only in Christ. In the mean time, however, I confess, that the love of God was first in point of time, and of order, too, as to God, but with respect to us, the commencement of his love has its foundation in the sacrifice of Christ. For when we contemplate God without a Mediator, we cannot conceive of Him otherwise than as angry with us: a Mediator interposed between us, makes us feel, that He is pacified towards us. As, however, this also is necessary to be known by us -- that Christ came forth to us from the fountain of God's free mercy, the Scripture explicitly teaches both -- that the anger of the Father has been appeased by the sacrifice of the Son, and that the Son has been offered up for the expiation of the sins of men on this ground -- because God, exercising compassion towards them, receives them, on the ground of such a pledge, into favor.

The whole may be summed up thus: "Where sin is, there the anger of God is, and therefore God is not propitious to us without, or before, his blotting out our sins, by not imputing them. *[emphasis mine]* **As our consciences cannot apprehend this benefit, otherwise than through the intervention of Christ's sacrifice, it is not without good reason, that Paul makes that the commencement and cause of reconciliation, with regard to us.**

And hath committed to us. Again he repeats, that a commission has been given to the ministers of the gospel to communicate to us this grace. For it might be objected, "Where is Christ now, the peacemaker between God and us? At what a distance he resides from us!" He says, therefore, that as he has once suffered, (1 Peter 3:18,) so he daily presents to us the fruit of his suffering through means of the Gospel, which he designed, should be in the world, as a sure and authentic register of the reconciliation, that has once been effected. It is the part of ministers, therefore, to apply to us, so to speak, the fruit of Christ's death.

[emphasis mine] **Lest, however, any one should dream of a magical application, such as Papists contrive, we must carefully observe what he immediately subjoins -- that it consists wholly in the preaching of the Gospel.** For the Pope, along with his priests, makes use of this pretext for giving a color of warrant for the whole of that wicked and execrable system of merchandise, which they carry on, in connection with the salvation of souls. "The Lord," say they, "has furnished us with a commission and authority to forgive sins." This I acknowledge, provided they discharge that embassy, of which Paul here makes mention. The absolution, however, which they make use of in the Papacy, is entirely magical; and besides, they inclose pardon of sins in lead and parchment, or they connect it with fictitious and frivolous superstitions. What resemblance do all these things bear to the

appointment of Christ? *[emphasis mine]* **Hence the ministers of the Gospel restore us to the favor of God in a right and orderly manner, when they bear testimony to us by means of the Gospel as to the favor of God having been procured for us. Let this testimony be removed, and nothing remains but mere imposture. Beware, then, of placing even the smallest drop of your confidence on any thing apart from the Gospel.**

I do not, indeed, deny, that the grace of Christ is applied to us in the sacraments, and that our reconciliation with God is then confirmed in our consciences; but, as the testimony of the Gospel is engraven upon the sacraments, they are not to be judged of separately by themselves, but must be taken in connection with the Gospel, of which they are appendages. *[emphasis mine]* **In fine, the ministers of the Church are ambassadors, for testifying and proclaiming the benefit of reconciliation, only on this condition -- that they speak from the Gospel, as from an authentic register.**

Gill, Commentary, 2 Corinthians 5:19

To wit, that God was in Christ reconciling the world unto himself

[emphasis mine] **This expresses and explains the subject matter of the ministration of the Gospel, especially that part of it which concerns our reconciliation with God; and declares the scheme, the author, the subjects, the way, and means, and consequence of it.** The phrase, "in Christ", may be either joined with the word "God", as in our version, "God was in Christ reconciling"; that is, he was in Christ drawing the scheme, fixing the method of reconciliation; his thoughts were employed about it, which were thoughts of peace; he called a council of peace, and entered into a covenant of peace with Christ, who was appointed and agreed to, to be the peacemaker. Or with the word "reconciling", thus, God "was reconciling in Christ"; that is, by Christ; and so it denotes, as before, actual reconciliation by Christ. God, in pursuance of his purposes, council, and covenant, sent his Son to make peace; and laid our sins, and the chastisement of our peace upon him; this is the punishment of sin, whereby satisfaction was made for it, and so peace with God: or with the word "world", thus, "God was reconciling the world in Christ"; by whom are meant, not all the individuals of mankind, for these are not all in Christ, nor all reconciled to God, multitudes dying in enmity to him, nor all interested in the blessing of non-imputation of sin; whereas each of these is said of the world: but the elect of God, who are chosen in Christ, whose peace Christ is, whose sins are not imputed to them, and against whom no charge of any avail can be laid; and particularly the people of God among the Gentiles are here designed, who are frequently called "the world" in Scripture; being the world which God loved, for whose sins Christ is the propitiation, and of the reconciling of which mention is particularly made, (John 3:16) (1 John 2:2) (Romans 11:12 Romans 11:15) . *[emphasis mine]* **And**

this sense well agrees with the context, which signifies, that no man is regarded for his natural descent; it is no matter whether he is a Jew or a Gentile, provided he is but a new creature: for Gospel reconciliation, and the ministry of it, concern one as well as another. Moreover, this reconciliation must be considered, either as intentional, or actual, or as a publication of it in the ministry of the word; and taken either way it cannot be thought to extend to every individual person in the world: if it is to be understood intentionally, that God intended the reconciliation of the world to himself by Christ, and drew the scheme of it in him, his intentions cannot be frustrated; his counsel shall stand, and he will do all his pleasure; a scheme so wisely laid by him in his Son, cannot come to nothing, or only in part be executed; and yet this must be the case, if it was his design to reconcile every individual of mankind to himself, since a large number of them are not reconciled to him: and if the words are to be understood of an actual reconciliation of the world unto God by Christ, which sense agrees with the preceding verse, then it is out of all question, that the word "world" cannot be taken in so large a sense as to take in every man and woman in the world; since it is certain that there are many who are not reconciled to God, who die in their sins, whose peace is not made with him, nor are they reconciled to the way of salvation by Christ: and should it be admitted that the ministry of reconciliation is here designed, which is not an offer of reconciliation to the world, but a proclamation or declaration of peace and reconciliation made by the death of Christ; this is not sent to all men; multitudes were dead before the word of reconciliation was committed to the apostles; and since, there have been great numbers who have never so much as heard of it; and even in the times of the apostles it did not reach to everyone then living: besides, the text does not speak of what God did by the ministry of his apostles, but of what he himself had been doing in his Son, and which was antecedent, and gave rise unto and was the foundation of their ministry. *[emphasis mine]* **There was a scheme of reconciliation drawn in the counsels of God before the world began, and an actual reconciliation by the death of Christ, which is published in the Gospel, which these words contain the sum and substance of: and this reconciliation, as before, is said to be "unto himself"; to his offended justice, and for the glory of his perfections, and the reconciling of them together in the affair of salvation:**

not imputing their trespasses.

This was what he resolved upon from all eternity, that inasmuch as Christ was become the surety and substitute of his people, he would not impute their sins to them, or look for satisfaction for them from them; but would reckon and place them to the account of their surety, and expect satisfaction from him; and accordingly he did, and accordingly he had it. And this will, not to impute sin to his people, or not to punish for it, which existed in God from everlasting, is no other than a justification of them; for to whom the Lord does not impute sin, he imputes righteousness, and such are properly justified.

And hath committed unto us the word of reconciliation;

***[emphasis mine]* or put it in us, as a rich and valuable treasure; for such the doctrine of peace and reconciliation, by the blood of Christ, is; a sacred deposition, committed to the trust of faithful men, to be dispensed and disposed of for the use and purpose for which it is given them.**

Calvin, Commentary, 2nd Corinthians 5:20

As if God did beseech you This is of no small importance for giving authority to the embassy: nay more, it is absolutely necessary, for who would rest upon the testimony of men, in reference to his eternal salvation? It is a matter of too much importance, to allow of our resting contented with the promise of men, without feeling assured that they are ordained by God, and that God speaks to us by them. This is the design of those commendations, with which Christ himself signalizes his Apostles:

He that heareth you, heareth me, etc. (Luke 10:16.)

Whatsoever you shall loose on earth, shall be loosed in heaven, (Matthew 18:18,)

and the like.

We entreat you, in Christ's stead. Hence we infer, with what propriety Isaiah exclaims,

How blessed are the feet of them that preach the Gospel! (Isaiah 52:7.)

For that one thing, that is of itself sufficient for completing our felicity, and without which we are most miserable, is conferred upon us, only through means of the Gospel. If, however, this duty is enjoined upon all the ministers of the Church, in such a way, that he who does not discharge this embassy is not to be regarded either as an Apostle, or as a Pastor, we may very readily judge from this, as to the nature of the Pope's entire hierarchy. They are desirous, indeed, to be looked upon as Apostles and Pastors; but as they are dumb idols, how will their boasting [561] correspond with this passage of Paul's writings. The word entreat is expressive of an unparalleled commendation of the grace of Christ, inasmuch as He stoops so low, that he does not disdain to entreat us. So much the less excusable is our depravity, if we do not, on meeting with such kindness, show ourselves teachable and compliant.

Be reconciled. [emphasis mine] **It is to be observed, that Paul is here addressing himself to believers. He declares, that he brings to them every day this embassy. Christ therefore, did not suffer, merely that he might once expiate our sins, nor was the gospel appointed merely with a**

view to the pardon of those sins which we committed previously to baptism, but that, as we daily sin, so we might, also, by a daily remission, be received by God into his favor. For this is a continued embassy, [563] which must be assiduously sounded forth in the Church, till the end of the world; and the gospel cannot be preached, unless remission of sins is promised.

We have here an express and suitable declaration for refuting the impious tenet of Papists, which calls upon us to seek the remission of sins after Baptism from some other source, than from the expiation that was effected through the death of Christ. Now this doctrine is commonly held in all the schools of Popery -- that, after baptism, we merit the remission of sins by penitence, through means of the aid of the keys, (Matthew 16:19,) -- as if baptism itself could confer this upon us without penitence. By the term penitence, however, they mean satisfactions. *[emphasis mine]* **But what does Paul say here? He calls us to go, not less after baptism, than before it, to the one expiation made by Christ, that we may know that we always obtain it gratuitously. Farther, all their prating as to the administration of the keys is to no purpose, inasmuch as they conceive of keys apart from the Gospel, while they are nothing else than that testimony of a gratuitous reconciliation, which is made to us in the Gospel.**

Gill, Commentary, 2nd Corinthians 5:20

Now then we are ambassadors for Christ

Since God has made reconciliation by Christ, and the ministry of it is committed to us, we are ambassadors for him; *[emphasis mine]* **we come with full powers from him, not to propose terms of peace, to treat with men about it, to offer it to them, but to publish and proclaim it as made by him:** we represent him, and God who made it by him,

as though God did beseech you by us;

to regard this embassy and message of peace, which we bring from him; to consider from whence it takes its rise, what methods have been used to effect it, and how it is accomplished; which should oblige to say and sing with the angels, "glory to God in the highest, on earth peace, and good will towards men"; and to behave in peaceable manner to all men, and one another:

we pray you in Christ's stead;

representing him as if he was present before you:

be ye reconciled to God;

[emphasis mine] **you, who are new creatures, for whom Christ has died, and peace is made; you, the members of the church at Corinth, who upon a profession of faith have been taken**

into such a relation; be ye reconciled to all the dispensations of divine Providence towards you; let your wills bow, and be resigned to his, since he is the God of peace to you; and as you are reconciled by Christ as a priest, be reconciled to him as your King, and your God; to all his ordinances and appointments; to all the orders and laws of his house; conform in all things to his will and pleasure, which we, as his ambassadors, in his name and stead, have made known unto you. You ought to be all obedience to him, and never dispute anything he says or orders.

Calvin, Commentary, 2nd Corinthians 5:21

Him who knew no sin. Do you observe, that, according to Paul, there is no return to favor with God, except what is founded on the sacrifice of Christ alone? Let us learn, therefore, to turn our views in that direction, whenever we desire to be absolved from guilt. He now teaches more clearly, what we adverted to above -- that God is propitious to us, when he acknowledges us as righteous. For these two things are equivalent -- that we are acceptable to God, and that we are regarded by him as righteous.

To know no sin is to be free from sin. He says, then, that Christ, while he was entirely exempt from sin, was made sin for us. It is commonly remarked, that sin here denotes an expiatory sacrifice for sin, and in the same way the Latin's term it, *piaculum* Paul, too, has in this, and other passages, borrowed this phrase from the Hebrews, among whom (*asham*) denotes an expiatory sacrifice, as well as an offense or crime. *[emphasis mine]* **But the signification of this word, as well as the entire statement, will be better understood from a comparison of both parts of the antithesis. Sin is here contrasted with righteousness, when Paul teaches us, that we were made the righteousness of God, on the ground of Christ's having been made sin. Righteousness, here, is not taken to denote a quality or habit, but by way of imputation, on the ground of Christ's righteousness being reckoned to have been received by us. What, on the other hand, is denoted by sin? It is the guilt, on account of which we are arraigned at the bar of God. As, however, the curse of the individual was of old cast upon the victim, so Christ's condemnation was our absolution, and with his stripes we are healed.** (Isaiah 53:5.)

The righteousness of God in him In the first place, the righteousness of God is taken here to denote -- not that which is given us by God, but that which is approved of by him, as in John 12:43, the glory of God means -- that which is in estimation with him -- the glory of men denotes the vain applause of the world. Farther, in Romans 3:23, when he says, that we have come short of the glory of God, he means, that there is nothing that we can glory in before God, for it is no very difficult matter to appear righteous before men, but it is a mere delusive appearance of righteousness, which becomes at last the ground of perdition. Hence, that is the only true righteousness, which is acceptable to God.

Let us now return to the contrast between righteousness and sin. *[emphasis mine]* **How are we righteous in the sight of God? It is assuredly in the same respect in which Christ was a sinner. For he assumed in a manner our place, that he might be a criminal in our room, and might be dealt with as a sinner, not for his own offenses, but for those of others, inasmuch as he was pure and exempt from every fault, and might endure the punishment that was due to us -- not to himself. It is in the same manner, assuredly, that we are now righteous in him -- not in respect of our rendering satisfaction to the justice of God by our own works, but because we are judged of in connection with Christ's righteousness, which we have put on by faith, that it might become ours.** On this account I have preferred to retain the particle en, (in,) rather than substitute in its place per, (through,) for that signification corresponds better with Paul's intention.

Gill, Commentary, 2nd Corinthians 5:21

For he hath made him to be sin for us

Christ was made of a woman, took flesh of a sinful woman; though the flesh he took of her was not sinful, being sanctified by the Spirit of God, the former of Christ's human nature: however, he appeared "in the likeness of sinful flesh"; being attended with infirmities, the effects of sin, though sinless; and he was traduced by men as a sinner, and treated as such. Moreover, he was made a sacrifice for sin, in order to make expiation and atonement for it; so the Hebrew word signifies both sin and a sin offering; see (Psalms 40:6) and so (amartia) (Romans 8:3) (Hebrews 10:6) . But besides all this, he was made sin itself by imputation; the sins of all his people were transferred unto him, laid upon him, and placed to his account; he sustained their persons, and bore their sins; and having them upon him, and being chargeable with, and answerable for them, he was treated by the justice of God as if he had been not only a sinner, but a mass of sin; for to be made sin, is a stronger expression than to be made a sinner: but now that this may appear to be only by imputation, and that none may conclude from hence that he was really and actually a sinner, or in himself so, it is said he was "made sin"; he did not become sin, or a sinner, through any sinful act of his own, but through his Father's act of imputation, to which he agreed; for it was "he" that made him sin: it is not said that men made him sin; not but that they traduced him as a sinner, pretended they knew he was one, and arraigned him at Pilate's bar as such; nor is he said to make himself so, though he readily engaged to be the surety of his people, and voluntarily took upon him their sins, and gave himself an offering for them; but he, his Father, is said to make him sin; it was he that "laid", or "made to meet" on him, the iniquity of us all; it was he that made his soul an offering for sin, and delivered him up into the hands of justice, and to death, and that "for us", in "our" room and stead, to bear the punishment of sin, and make satisfaction and atonement for it; of which he was capable, and for which he was greatly qualified: for he

knew no sin;

which cannot be understood or pure absolute ignorance of sin; for this cannot agree with him, neither as God, nor as Mediator; he full well knew the nature of sin, as it is a transgression of God's law; he knows the origin of sin, the corrupt heart of man, and the desperate wickedness of that; he knows the demerit, and the sad consequences of it; he knows, and he takes notice of too, the sins of his own people; and he knows the sins of all wicked men, and will bring them all into judgment, convince of them, and condemn for them: but he knew no sin so as to approve of it, and like it; he hates, abhors, and detests it; he never was conscious of any sin to himself; he never knew anything of this kind by, and in himself; nor did he ever commit any, nor was any ever found in him, by men or devils, though diligently sought for. This is mentioned, partly that we may better understand in what sense he was made sin, or a sinner, which could be only by the imputation of the sins of others, since he had no sin of his own; and partly to show that he was a very fit person to bear and take away the sins of men, to become a sacrifice for them, seeing he was the Lamb of God, without spot and blemish, typified in this, as in other respects, by the sacrifices of the legal dispensation; also to make it appear that he died, and was cut off in a judicial way, not for himself, his own sins, but for the transgressions of his people; and to express the strictness of divine justice in not sparing the Son of God himself, though holy and harmless, when he had the sins of others upon him, and had made himself responsible for them. The end of his being made sin, though he himself had none, was,

that we might be made the righteousness of God in him;

not the essential righteousness of God, which can neither be imparted nor imputed; nor any righteousness of God wrought in us; for it is a righteousness "in him", in Christ, and not in ourselves, and therefore must mean the righteousness of Christ; so called, because it is wrought by Christ, who is God over all, the true God, and eternal life; and because it is approved of by God the Father, accepted of by him, for, and on the behalf of his elect, as a justifying one; it is what he bestows on them, and imputes unto them for their justification; it is a righteousness, and it is the only one which justifies in the sight of God. *[emphasis mine]* **Now to be made the righteousness of God, is to be made righteous in the sight of God, by the imputation of the righteousness of Christ. Just as Christ is made sin, or a sinner, by the imputation of the sins of others to him; so they are made righteousness, or righteous persons, through the imputation of his righteousness to them; and in no other way can the one be made sin, or the other righteousness. And this is said to be "in him", in Christ; which shows, that though Christ's righteousness is unto all, and upon all them that believe, it is imputed to them, and put upon them; it is not anything wrought in them; it is not inherent in them. "Surely in the Lord have I righteousness and strength", says the church, (Isaiah 45:24) and also, that the way in which we come by this righteousness is by being in Christ; none have it reckoned to them, but who are in him, we are first "of" God "in" Christ, and**

then he is made unto us righteousness. Secret being in Christ, or union to him from everlasting, is the ground and foundation of our justification, by his righteousness, as open being in Christ at conversion is the evidence of it.

Scriptural Summary

This was a massive amount of text, to be sure, but it was necessary, in order to show that in the 3 primary passage dealing with "reconciliation" in Scripture, two major, full commentators on Scripture, both pre-racialism, both *also* authors of systematic theologies in the wake of the Reformation, knew nothing whatsoever of racial implications therein. We are not quite done, however. As we have seen, neither commentator knows anything about "race", nor does the Scriptural text. Neither commentator knows anything about "reconciliation between races," and neither does the Scriptural text. The Biblical text defines reconciliation very clearly, however; The renewal and adoption of the elect; formerly estranged and alienated from God; into newness of life and vital union with Christ; Further, clothed in His righteousness, as joint heirs of the Father with Christ, in Christ, and through Christ. Christ is all and in all - and outside of Him, there is no reconciliation. Finally, there is no reconciliation spoken of in Scripture concerning the Gospel which is not specifically, expressly, a reconciliation *of men to God, by Christ, through His death as propitiation for sin.*

Do not lie to one another, since you laid aside the old self with its evil practices, and have put on the new self who is being renewed to a true knowledge according to the image of the One who created him—a *renewal* in which there is no *distinction between* Greek and Jew, circumcised and uncircumcised, barbarian, Scythian, slave and freeman, but Christ is all, and in all. - Col 3:9-11

The Spirit Himself testifies with our spirit that we are children of God, and if children, heirs also, heirs of God and fellow heirs with Christ, if indeed we suffer with *Him* so that we may also be glorified with *Him*. - Rom 8:16-17

The old self had evil practices - the old man had Jew as differentiated from Greek - God's chosen covenant people and everyone else. The distinction was the covenant or not-covenant. Circumcised, and uncircumcised - bearers of the covenant sign, or non-bearers. Barbarian, Scythian - the most wild of the barbarians - he is addressing the distinctions held within the Greco-Roman world now - there were the civilized, the Greeks and Romans - the Mediterranean cultures of antiquity - and the barbarians - and even more so, the barbarians considered hopeless, like the Scythians. There is no slave or free - their outward conditions of citizenship or servitude, distinctions important to the Roman culture - are irrelevant to their status before God. They are all joint heirs together with Him. There are no second-class Christians. Harkening back to earlier in Ephesians 2, we are all raised up with Him, and seated together in the heavenly places. (Eph 2:6) In search of an alternative for this unfortunate phraseology, we will later examine what various authors commend to us as "racial reconciliation", and consider what it is they

seem to be truly asking for. Following that, I will offer what I hope to be a superior, and Biblically sound title (and concept) to offer as a solution to the problems they want this reconciliation to rectify. Next, we will look at a full list of all the words translated as "reconcile" or any form thereof in our English translations of the NT.

Words and their cognates translated as "reconcile"

Notice in 2nd Corinthians 5 that 2 different forms are used in the same passage.

καταλλάσσω - *katallássō*

Romans 5:10 - used 2x

εἰ γὰρ ἐχθροὶ ὄντες **κατηλλάγημεν** τῷ θεῷ διὰ τοῦ θανάτου τοῦ υἱοῦ αὐτοῦ πολλῶ μᾶλλον **καταλλαγέντες** σωθησόμεθα ἐν τῇ ζωῇ αὐτοῦ

1 Cor 7:11

ἐὰν δὲ καὶ χωρισθῆ μενέτω ἄγαμος ἢ τῷ ἀνδρὶ **καταλλαγήτω** καὶ ἄνδρα γυναῖκα μὴ ἀφιέναι

2 Cor 5:18,19,20

τὰ δὲ πάντα ἐκ τοῦ θεοῦ τοῦ **καταλλάξαντος** ἡμᾶς ἑαυτῷ διὰ Χριστοῦ καὶ δόντος ἡμῖν τὴν διακονίαν τῆς καταλλαγῆς ὡς ὅτι θεὸς ἦν ἐν Χριστῷ κόσμον **καταλλάσσω** ἑαυτῷ μὴ λογιζόμενος αὐτοῖς τὰ παραπτώματα αὐτῶν καὶ θέμενος ἐν ἡμῖν τὸν λόγον τῆς καταλλαγῆς ὑπὲρ Χριστοῦ οὐκ ἠρεσβεύομεν ὡς τοῦ θεοῦ παρακαλοῦντος δι' ἡμῶν δεόμεθα ὑπὲρ Χριστοῦ **καταλλάγητε** τῷ θεῷ

καταλλαγή - *katallagḗ*

Romans 5:11

οὐ μόνον δὲ ἀλλὰ καὶ καυχώμενοι ἐν τῷ θεῷ διὰ τοῦ κυρίου ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ δι' οὗ νῦν τὴν **καταλλαγήν** ἐλάβομεν

Romans 11:15

εἰ γὰρ ἡ ἀποβολὴ αὐτῶν **καταλλαγή** κόσμου τίς ἢ πρόσλημις εἰ μὴ ζωὴ ἐκ νεκρῶν

2 Cor 5:18,19

τὰ δὲ πάντα ἐκ τοῦ θεοῦ τοῦ καταλλάξαντος ἡμᾶς ἑαυτῷ διὰ Χριστοῦ καὶ δόντος ἡμῖν τὴν διακονίαν

τῆς **καταλλαγῆς** ὡς ὅτι θεὸς ἦν ἐν Χριστῷ κόσμον καταλλάσσων ἑαυτῷ μὴ λογιζόμενος αὐτοῖς τὰ παραπτώματα αὐτῶν καὶ θέμενος ἐν ἡμῖν τὸν λόγον τῆς **καταλλαγῆς**

ἀποκαταλλάσσω - *apokatallássō*

Eph 2:16

καὶ **ἀποκαταλλάξῃ** τοὺς ἀμφοτέρους ἐν ἐνὶ σώματι τῷ θεῷ διὰ τοῦ σταυροῦ ἀποκτείνας τὴν ἐχθρὰν ἐν αὐτῷ

Col 1:20,22

καὶ δι' αὐτοῦ **ἀποκαταλλάξαι** τὰ πάντα εἰς αὐτόν εἰρηνοποιήσας διὰ τοῦ αἵματος τοῦ σταυροῦ αὐτοῦ δι' αὐτοῦ εἶτε τὰ ἐπὶ τῆς γῆς εἶτε τὰ ἐν τοῖς οὐρανοῖς καὶ ὑμᾶς ποτε ὄντας ἀπηλλοτριωμένους καὶ ἐχθροὺς τῇ διανοίᾳ ἐν τοῖς ἔργοις τοῖς πονηροῖς νυνὶ δὲ **ἀποκατήλλαξεν** ἐν τῷ σώματι τῆς σαρκὸς αὐτοῦ διὰ τοῦ θανάτου παραστήσαι ὑμᾶς ἁγίους καὶ ἀμώμους καὶ ἀνεγκλήτους κατενώπιον αὐτοῦ

The singular usage of **καταλλάσσω** *not* specifically salvific, as I mentioned early on, is in 1st Corinthians 7:11 - where the wife "must remain unmarried, or else be **reconciled** to her husband." Given the obvious and unargued parallel of marriage with Christ and His Church, I don't see any particular issue with this usage for our thesis. It certainly doesn't lend support to the contrary.

There are two other terms not used in a salvific context that are translated as "reconcile" and , respectively.

In Acts 7:26, Stephen, when relating the story of Moses, is recorded by Luke as using **συναλλάσσω** - *synallássō* - quoting Moses as he attempts to "**reconcile**" the two Hebrews fighting each other.

This is a *hapax legomena* - used only once in the NT.

In Matthew 5:24, Jesus is recorded as using **διαλλάσσω** - *diállassō* - when telling men to "be **reconciled**" with their brother before presenting an offering on the altar.

This is a *hapax legomena* - used only once in the NT.

So, while some might want to make an argument from 1st Corinthians, that's a rather slim reed upon which to hang an argument, is it not?

Col 3:10 2Cor 4:16 linked?

Definitional Difficulties

Very quickly, let's go over the definition of "race", as well as "racial reconciliation", as imagined by various groups. I couldn't find a definition on RAAN or Reformed Margins, unfortunately - which is a shame, given that they mention it so often. I tried multiple search strings, but didn't get anything that actually defined the term. As far as I can tell, it's considered to be obvious, or self-explanatory to someone visiting their sites. If I might make a suggestion - that might be something to rectify on your websites. While the PCA has [a pastoral letter on racism](#) from 2004, and [a position paper on racial reconciliation](#), which both exhort their denomination and pledge to "work hard" "for the encouragement of racial reconciliation", in neither of these documents is the term actually defined. Race, as well, is commended as a biblical category, but not defined - nor is it supported from Scripture.

Dr. Jasper Williams, who we have mentioned already, has an interesting take on both the subject of race, and the subject of reconciliation - at least as he would have defined it previous to his recent change of position, which we outlined previously. He states in [this 2015 interview with TGC](#): "In my view, the category of race biblically is the category of otherness. And that otherness can be categorized as Jew and Gentile. Jews would be those people whom God chose in the Old Testament to be this ethnic group through whom he would send the Messiah, and Gentiles would be everybody not a Jew. So, in terms of the racial division, it is a division between Jews and Gentiles that exists because of sin, and as history progresses, it exists also because of the Law." My primary objection with this is that his definition of "racial reconciliation" to come up next will depend on not only the gospel reconciliation of man to God, but of Jews to Gentiles - the other. His thesis is that the model of "racial reconciliation" is of Jews to Gentiles in the reconciliation of the cross. Was that separation between Jew and Gentile, then, an "institutional sin" of the Old Covenant Law, instituted by God, which separated the two groups, and required reconciliation by Christ? Why was Israel set apart? By the sovereign choice of God. That's the "racial division" that he points us to, as the Biblical pattern, no? Given that this "otherness" was the institution of God himself, to set apart for himself a "peculiar people", and that the "racial reconciliation" that Dr. Williams exhorted us to is to both - Jew and Gentile - be *likewise* set apart, as a *new* chosen people, set apart from the *rest* of humanity - are we not thereby setting up a new pattern of institutionalized race, where the Israel of God is *forever* set apart from the reprobate?

In the same interview, he says: "The second thing evangelicals often misunderstand is that racial reconciliation is actually within the gospel itself. I despise the idea of it being an implication of the gospel, because an implication of the gospel sounds as though maybe it's important, but it's not explicitly stated. In my view, it is explicitly stated; God is going to crush the head of the serpent by means of the seed of the woman. God is going to bless the nations through Abraham, and God does that by sending Jesus, a Jewish Messiah, to die on the cross for Jews and Gentiles, and he raised him up from the dead for Jews and Gentiles. . . . In my view, racism is not a mere social issue instead of a gospel issue, it is a gospel issue. It is a social issue insofar as the gospel speaks to people in societies in the real world."

Now, Dr. Williams is probably not the only person defining race, or reconciliation that way. However, that is neither the traditional definition of race, and would probably be considered novel by both modern theologians as well as sociologists - not novel to him, perhaps, but novel to the current popular consideration. What I'm most concerned with pointing out, however, is the variance of that definition even within his own work.

For instance, only 7 months later, [he says at 9Marks](#): "Race was one kind of social construct in the biblical world, and it is another kind of social construct today. Race in the ancient biblical world was a social construct based on special characteristics that had nothing to do with pseudo-scientific racism. Race in the modern world is a product of eighteenth and nineteenth century racist theories in Europe about the "science" of whiteness and non-whiteness."

Now, perhaps I have insufficient context here, but it seems to me that he is saying at this point that race, in the ancient world - if not Biblically, we aren't told specifically - was a "social construct" - *arrived at* in a similar fashion to the way that it has today. By societal construction. What we aren't told, sadly, is why he believes this to be so. He goes on to say "Could the very construct of race be one more manifestation of the sin of racism? Racism begetting the very idea of race?" This is, in point of fact, the opinion of many sociologists, and perhaps the prevailing viewpoint in the academy. However, just 7 months prior, we were being told, by the same author, that race was a category within Scripture, that its distinctive characteristic is otherness, and that division was between Jew and Gentile. What it isn't, however, is argued. This is, perhaps, the most frustrating thing about dealing with this issue. Not only are precise definitions hard to find, but they are highly variable, even within the body of an author's own work, and when presented, they are rarely argued, but simply presented as fact. Even Williams states as much, when he says: "Christians in general must do a better job at defining the gospel, race, and racial reconciliation." What is not helpful, however, is the insertion of things *into* the gospel - like race - and then claiming they are *part* of the Gospel, without argumentation presented to substantiate this claim.

However, there's something else, perhaps more important, to take from this last article of Williams'. It's perhaps the most succinct definition I have found, but perhaps the most frustrating. Here is what he says. "[D]iversity is not the same as gospel-centered racial reconciliation and the goal of gospel-centered racial reconciliation is not simply diversity. ... Gospel-grounded racial reconciliation begins with what Christ accomplished at the cross. He united one-time enemies to God and therefore to one another. He made the two one. Racial reconciliation begins, in other words, with the 'indicative' of who we are in Christ. And then racial reconciliation shows itself in our love for the 'other.' It flows from the Spirit-empowered obedience and demonstration of who we are in Christ."

Now, this seems clear, as far as it goes - but it is frustratingly light on specifics - on the sort of detailed definition that should characterize something said to be *part of the Gospel*. Not only the lack of details, but the incontrovertible fact that *this is an idea that has, since the inception of the church, and our recorded history of it, has been absent in every teaching concerning the gospel proclamation*. When we are introducing something with

even the appearance of novelty, especially to Reformed believers, we should be careful, and in fact, make every effort to, demonstrate that such a teaching is *ad fontes*. This is something we cannot pass over for fear of being considered insensitive, or inconsiderate. It must be addressed for the sake of the Gospel, and the health of the church. These things should not be, brethren.

You may also see a detailed discussion here: [Divided by Faith: Evangelical Religion and the Problem of Race in America](#)

Note the definition, and the suggested solutions.

Note this definition by Dr. Williams here: [One New Man: The Cross and Racial Reconciliation in Pauline Theology](#)

Note the definition, as he has said elsewhere, and the assumption that "races" need to reconcile "to one another".

Note this definition at New City Fellowship: [Racial Reconciliation](#)

Note the definition, and the assumption that we are to "bring about peace between believers of different races and ethnicities".

Note this definition from [Winning the Race to Unity: Is Racial Reconciliation Really Working?](#)

This author is critical towards "racial reconciliation", and notes that it assumes a previously good relationship, and restoration to that relationship - and that the proof texts usually employed to support the concept are inapplicable.

If we are to discuss "race", what, precisely, are we discussing? Are we discussing a purportedly biological differentiation that gives different groups distinct physical, visually recognizable characteristics? None of our authors examined believe this to be the case - yet, the conversation, in popular culture, and even the previous authors' own articles, when not dealing with the topic in a technical fashion, all too often present(s) race as something to do with physical, visually recognizable characteristics. In popular culture, this is still the most used, and most abused working definition of "race". What it doesn't do, of course, is define what makes a *particular* race, or why it matters - but the presence of that concept of race - racialism - is the underlying cause of the vast majority of racism anyone in this country encounters. Are we discussing a conceptual definition of race that closely parallels the conception of the Israel, or "other" separation that God instituted? Or, perhaps, a "race as an instrument of western European imperialism"? Or none of the above? If we can't get a feasible definition from those who say they are the most concerned with the topic, are considered experts in the field of study, and whom we are told, by many others, should be listened to especially carefully, what *are* we to think about the topic? Especially when, in a practical sense, the details of these technical definitions seem to be ignored whenever it comes to "self-identification" of one's own "racial identity" - or when the nearly universally rejected definition, based on superficial

physical appearances, is reinforced, over and over, by the non-technical discussion, and practices of those who reject that definition in a formal sense? If your practice doesn't match your principles, you have to change *something*.

These are questions we must consider prayerfully and thoughtfully - and answer with measured consideration. I am willing to learn, and would be more than happy to see my work here responded to - or even expanded upon, elsewhere. If someone has said it better, or responded to these arguments previously, I would appreciate knowing where that material could be found. I look forward to discussing the subject further.

Closing Arguments

In closing, I wish to offer an argument against racial reconciliation, as the product of my discussion in this paper.

Racial reconciliation must, by its own terms, deny the Scriptural witness. There is no such thing as "race" to be found in Scripture. Reconciliation in Scripture is never seen to be between anyone but men and God, in the union of Christ and His Church (or the earthly picture of this union, marriage) - let alone races. However, its claim to be a necessity for Christians to engage in are founded upon a supposed injunction that we can find in Scripture. If Scripture is examined, no such injunction exists. Racial reconciliation, on the terms of most who call for it, is also a contradiction in terms due to their definition of race. If, as they claim on the one hand, race is a social construct, created to justify an illegitimate and unjust enslavement of entire populations, it cannot also be the category within which reconciliation of two categories of races thereby created is achieved. Reconciliation of illegitimate categories is an illegitimate reconciliation. It is necessarily as fictitious as the category itself. Race is an absurdity.

Reconciliation of groups of that category is equally absurd. Racism, in fact, is an inevitable conclusion of - or, perhaps, the producer of - categories which arbitrarily, artificially divide humanity into unnatural, incoherent, and superficial groups. The basis of this unnatural division is a pseudo-scientific theory, born of a desire to justify the evils of man-stealing; a parasitic, and inhumane enslavement of entire populations as chattel for the selfish and brutish self-aggrandizement of greedy men. Man-stealing, of course, is specifically called sin in Scripture. The hatred toward, anger with, and aversion to others (an illegitimate cause is no cause at all) who are created in the image of God is also forbidden, as Christ explains when he expounds the full meaning of the law against murder in Matthew 5 - as is favoring some men above others due to their wealth or power, as James forbids in chapter 2 of his epistle. Another conception of division by physical appearances is called "racialism" - and seeks to classify humanity into different "races" on the basis of superficial, visible characteristics as a supposedly biological classification of humankind. As James says, "have you not made distinctions among yourselves, and become judges with evil motives?" He continues and says "But if you show partiality, you are committing sin and are convicted by the law as transgressors." You cannot believe in Sola Scriptura, and believe in races - nor can Sola Scriptura be said to govern the practice of those who *act* as if racialism were true. It governs our faith and practice.

On the contrary, the union with Christ with His people; the elect which he purchased by His blood, and the unity of the body of Christ in their sonship as well as their common renewal of and by the Spirit are both Scriptural truths. The end result - the product desired, and sought as the end of supposed racial reconciliation is, as far as I can determine, simply the unity of the body of Christ, as outlined in Scripture; unbroken by unbiblical division and schism on the basis of worldly patterns of thought and practice. It is not for nothing that Christ prays that we might be one, as He and the Father are one. He is the vine, and we are the branches cf. John 15. The natural branches of that vine, the Jews of the Old Covenant, had the Gentiles, wild olive branches, grafted into the one true vine, cf. Romans 11:16-24. In the New Covenant, we are one. Both sorts of branches are olive branches. Only one vine, however, is Christ. The branches grafted in are as much a part of the vine, in the new covenant, as the "natural" branches - grafted in with divine skill and dressed carefully, in His perfection, that they may bear more fruit. The scriptural delineations of human groups are, as is attested to in Revelation; tribes, tongues, peoples, and nations. Additional, arbitrary groupings are not only unnecessary, but contra-Biblical. The Old Covenant defined the antithesis of covenant members and covenant non-members in terms of Jews and Gentile. In the New Covenant, it is in terms of believers in Christ and those who disbelieve. The Biblical categories suffice us, and they alone can do so; because out of those categories are taken men, from every group, to become part of the heavenly throng, purchased for God with His blood, who will sing "Worthy are You," and reign upon the earth.

This contrary anthropology, which subverts the scriptural witness, is an absurdity. Reconciliation based upon it is also an absurdity. This idea is impossible. The Scriptures attest that we, one elect humanity, are united to Christ; will be raised, and will reign with Him, as joint heirs. We are children of adoption, once at enmity, but now friends and sons. The contrary is impossible. By the impossibility of the contrary, the Scriptural witness to this doctrine is true, and worthy of honor. The biblical anthropology, which does not vary with the ages, is the only one possible for the believer to espouse. If we want to truly practice our Reformation principles, we must apply *Semper Reformanda* to the illegitimate anthropology we have adopted in the form of racialism. Reform, and return *ad fontes*, to the historic, biblical anthropology taught to us by Scripture, and believed by the church throughout our history. It is the model for us, and for our children. We are all joint heirs by adoption - like the joint heirs in my family are. Both are mine by choice, and united to me by the bonds of marriage and adoption.

Appendix A: My narrative, so to speak.

I grew up in an extremely multicultural context . I am not originally from the South, but from southern Arizona. As a kid, with taquerias, supermercados and panaderias everywhere around me, and Latinos making up nearly half my hometown's population, and well over half of my neighbors, it was normal to be bilingual; Hispanic food and holidays were as much a part of my personal culture as it was for anyone else who wasn't Roman Catholic. I'm not what those who espouse racialism would consider to be "Hispanic" - but I'm influenced by the Latino culture there to a significant extent - and not just for the food. Chimichangas are the best thing ever, however. Bless you,

Sonora. When we moved to LA, it was generally the same situation. It wasn't until the riots of 1992 in Los Angeles, a few years after we moved to the High Desert suburbs, that the issue of race was even on my radar.

I'm the product of multiple immigrant families. To the best of my knowledge, only one of my ancestors at the time the American Civil War took place was born in the US. They were mostly from Germany or Portugal, with one each from Wales, and from England. The sole ancestor who was born here, out of that group, played with Tad Lincoln as a kid, incidentally. True story. They were from Springfield. Culturally, ethnically, I'm about as divorced from racial concerns as it is possible to be in our racially charged context. Which, you might say, influences my position. You're probably right; although, as you will see, that only goes so far. My position, you see, is that racialism is a social parasite that keeps breeding as long as you keep feeding it; it has nothing to do with Scripture, and is a novelty in Christian anthropology.

However, consider this from the perspective of someone who *doesn't* have that personal heritage of conflict. Someone whose ancestry was not present for the majority of the root causes for the issues facing us, whose culture was polyglot, with multiple influences, and who has been transplanted into a culture where, no matter how foreign to him they may be, these "racial" divisions are everyday truths that weigh on people's minds, and are acted out every day in racial conflicts of every sort. Imagine that I was dropped in from the backwoods of German/Portugese dirt farming in the 1860s, if that helps. This all looks crazy. I've lived here for over half of my adult life now, in south Mississippi, and it still makes no sense how seemingly random groups of people are lumped together into artificial, modernistic (19th century) categories based on skin color or other similar physical characteristics. I read about "racial reconciliation", and I wonder - what did my German/Portuguese dirt farmer ancestors have to do with European colonialism? With the Civil War - or even, the Revolutionary War, the slave trade, or anything even remotely related to them? What commonality could possibly exist with descendants of Mississippi plantation owners that qualifies me to share their "racial sins," whatever those are? I don't even think "race" as it is defined (or not defined, more typically) exists. It makes the same amount of sense to me as, for instance, holding a *Filipino* woman responsible for "racial reconciliation" over the Bataan Death March. I mean, she's Asian, right? We can get into why I think "racial" or "national" sins are a confusion of federal theology in a separate discussion if you'd like - but this paper is long enough already.

I got into the subject of "race" on Choosing Hats, initially, to deal with "kinists" - a group who not only believe "race" is important, in an identity sense, but who believe that the "races" should be separate from each other. They bemoan the "miscegenation" of the American melting pot, and long for a return to the (also mythical) Anglo-Saxon ideal for their particular, uniquely white ethno-cultural ethos. In the process of that study of their position, and boning up on things I, to be honest, find exceedingly distasteful, (if you have read kinist literature, you know of what I speak) I also confirmed some interesting things about what I was taught as a child. I already rejected the coherency of race. My parents didn't believe it was a sound category, and it was not taught to me as such. Being

homeschooled, there wasn't any particular impetus to change that conception, either. When I studied biology, I was taught that the differing physical characteristics visible in humans are as significant (ie: not significant in any biological sense) as the physical characteristics visible in different housecats - such as Tortoiseshells, Tabbies, Siamese, Abyssinian, Bombay, or Manx.

When I studied such subjects as apartheid, Nazism, chattel slavery, or the like, it was with the understanding that *such arbitrary division as a societal norm was fundamentally wrong, and the product of sinful men*. It was a result of the curse - not merely the racial discrimination and/or violence that follows upon such arbitrary division; although, of course, this was a worse sin - but the division itself, division without cause, was likewise. When I now looked into it as a formal study, I confirmed that not only was "race" *not* a Biblical concept, but confirmed that it wasn't even a *scientific* concept - even though it is still used, practically everywhere, as a fundamental identification of human groups. I already had that impression, of course, but I had never done the legwork to *prove* it, as it wasn't significant enough an issue for me, personally, to merit that sort of study, as of yet. (Perhaps some of you would call that "white privilege." I don't know. That was the culture for me, growing up in Tucson, AZ. Do people growing up in New Orleans who aren't les Acadiens "by birth", but *are* Cajun by culture "appropriate" that culture? I don't think so. It didn't occur to me to think of such things *in racial terms*. I only do so in order to step into the racist worldview now - so keep that under advisement. Some things about popular Southern culture, I will not adapt to. Racism is one of them.) I found that it was not only an unscientific concept, but an *arbitrary* social construct - and a novel one, at that! So, what could possibly be so... inveterate... about something with so little support? Well, as I have found, it is so deeply ingrained into particular subcultures, especially in the East, due to their peculiar history, that it resists most efforts at change - as do so many other "identity" classifications that have no objective basis, but are held in such esteem that they just don't seem to die out. This is all, however, autobiographical. Does it explain my mystification, and my impetus for this discussion, however? When I run into something I disagree with, I write about it. I'd love to get some feedback. Send it my way.

Appendix B: My Joint Heirs

